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A Jewish Tale.

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THE following work is from the second London edition, published under the direction of the 'Committee of General Literature and Education, appointed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge;' which, of itself, is sufficient to recommend it to the attention of a Christian community. The following preface from the work, gives a better idea of its design than could otherwise be done, and we extract it without further remark.

'The chief object of the Author of the following pages has been to exhibit the Evidences of Christianity, as they must have appeared to a Jew, in our Saviour's days. In order that this might be clearly done, it was necessary to point out the prevailing prejudices to which they were opposed: the Pharisee would not believe, because he had concealed his own private selfishness and ambition under the cloak of religion: the Sadducee was unconvinced, because his worldly-mindedness and love of earthly enjoyments called him away from all religious thoughts.

'The introduction of these points into a story, seemed more likely to attract the reader, than

if they had been barely exhibited through the medium of an argumentative treatise; while such a combination enabled the writer to intermix a small portion of Jewish Antiquities. In this particular, he must premise, that though he has interwoven nothing of his own, and is not quite sure that all which is so brought forward, is perfectly ascertained to have been consistent with Jewish customs, yet he conceives that there are probable grounds for believing that what is detailed, corresponds very nearly with the habits of the Jews.

‘As there always have been, and always will be, Pharisees and Sadducees under every religion, — as there still are practical unbelievers, it cannot be unimportant to exhibit these characters in every different form; and if, while the young Christian is made acquainted with some of the evidences which prove that Jesus is the Christ, it shall please God to open the heart of one of those unhappy persons, who, living under the brightness of the Gospel light, still prefer darkness; if it shall please God to convert one Christian Pharisee or Sadducee into a humble believer, through the instrumentality of this little book, He will confer on the writer a blessing far greater than he deserves — a blessing entirely due to His own merciful goodness.’

SADOC AND MIRIAM.

CHAPTER I.

SADOC and MIRIAM were the children of Nathan, a Jew advanced in years, whose domestic misfortunes had much enfeebled both his body and mind. Early in life he had been married to his beloved Hannah, and the first years of their mutual happiness had been clouded by no other circumstance than the barrenness of his wife. They had both frequently entreated the Lord, that some pledge of their common love might be granted to them, and God; whose dealings are wiser than those of men, having long denied their request, at length granted their petition: but the life of the mother was greatly endangered at the birth of Sadoc, and when Miriam was born, Hannah sank under the pangs of labor. Nathan, who was full of religion, had often reproached himself for the importunity with which he had sought for offspring; and, though he readily assented to the chastisements of his Maker, yet the loneliness of his mind, and the melancholy with which all

his thoughts were tinged, had impressed an appearance of premature decay upon his countenance, long before the period at which such traces are generally visible. He had now counted sixty summers; but for the last ten years, his brow had been covered with the snow of age, and his body bent down by afflictions: his only earthly comfort had been derived from the education of his children; and, being himself a firm and pious follower of the law of Moses, he had impressed the same sentiments on the minds of his offspring. He was by his creed a Pharisee, but his opinions were free from many of the absurdities into which most of his fellow Pharisees were apt to fall. Being well read in the Scriptures, he had now long expected the coming of the Messiah: when Jesus of Nazareth appeared among the Jews, there still existed so many doubts in his over-cautious mind, that he dared not acknowledge, even to himself, that this Teacher might prove the promised Deliverer. It was, therefore, with considerable alarm, that he learnt from Sadoc, that the son of Nathan had become a convert to the new faith.

‘What, my dear boy,’ said he, when this unwelcome news was imparted to him, ‘what has induced you to take this hasty step? Whatever your opinions may be, I know that they are

sincere, but I trust and hope that you have not by any rash action declared your sentiments in public. You have doubtless judged honestly on so important a point : I question not your intentions: you have ever lived the servant of the Most High, and punctually obeyed that precept which directs you to reverence your father, and I am sure that you would not communicate this change in your opinions, unless you were convinced that it was rightly made ; for you well know how much pain it must give me: but sincerity of intention proves that not the judgment has been correctly guided; and I must beg you not to expose yourself to the full wrath of the Sanhedrim, out of mere youthful haste.'

'I thank you,' replied *Sadoc*, 'for the kind opinion which you express concerning me. I well knew that the acknowledgment of my real sentiments would grieve you ; but, surely, if I am convinced, I ought to follow that will which the Almighty has revealed unto me. If, to profess to believe in a Teacher sent from heaven, shall expose the servant of God to reproaches, it is better to suffer reproaches with the servants of God, than to dwell in the tents of unrighteousness. I knew that I must grieve you for the moment; but may I not risk a transient pain, in the hope of becoming the

happy instrument of directing a father and a sister into the way of truth?’

Nathan. ‘I should think that you reasoned justly, if I could grant that the grounds on which your reasoning must be built were true. If this Jesus be the expected Deliverer, then blessed will all they be who follow him. But is there no such danger as that of being deceived?’

Sadoc. ‘Father, I cannot be deceived with regard to a Teacher whom I have so often seen and heard. At first, I doubted as you do; I reasoned with Talbai just as you have done with me, and his only answer was, “Come and see.” The friend of my bosom told me much of the miracles of Jesus: he described frequently the manner of his teaching, and the beauty of his instructions; but I long turned a deaf ear to his persuasions. And even when I first saw them with my own eyes, I doubted whether or no these miracles were real, or whether they might not have appeared to be performed through some power communicated by the father of lies; but I have seen so many wonders, and heard his doctrines, which cannot come from the enemy of mankind, for they bear upon them the very stamp of sacred truth, that I am myself convinced. The argument which Talbai used towards me, I address to you, “Come and see.”’

Nathan. 'Your method of trying to convince me is fairness itself; but alas! in the present state of the opinions of the Doctors learned in law, it would be impossible for me, who am so much respected for my prudence and sagacity, to make the experiment. To follow the Galilean would be to cast myself out of the synagogue; and all that I can promise is, that I will listen to your arguments, and join with you in searching for the truth; and when I am convinced, I need not say how readily I shall abide by the decision of my conscience, whatever it may be. The imprudence which has hurried you on, before you are master of the subject, may be pardoned in one of your age; but how would it become me? I trust that you have not expressed your opinions in public. Think of the disgrace which you must bring on all your relations: think of my being reviled as the father of an "accursed one," — of one who can gain admittance into no synagogue of the faithful: think what Hatipha will say; or rather, think of the way in which her father, Darkon, will receive you, as the lover of his child.'

Sadoc. 'My dearest, my only parent, I have thought of all this; and all this, and more than this, I am ready to bear. But why look at the dark side of the picture only? Speak of my

being able to convince those who are dearest to me, to adopt the same faith with which I am now blessed. Speak of the common salvation into which we shall all be admitted. Why may I not hope to persuade you and Darkon, and through you to be the happy means of convincing my sister and my Hatipha?’

Nathan. ‘Ah, Sadoc, your words are full of hope, but little tintured with reason. Will your arguments, whether true or false, convince the stern heart of Darkon? He is learned; he is admired; he is flattered by the Sanhedrim: his sayings are listened to as the oracles of God, and he has put himself forward as the persecutor of the Galilean and his followers; and as soon may God cease to be merciful, as Darkon shall reverse his decisions. It was he, my son, who brought forward the decree, that whoever believed in, or acknowledged this Jesus of Nazareth, should be put out of the synagogue.’

Sadoc. ‘Why, surely he has always loved me, and he will at least listen to what I have to say.’

Nathan. ‘He may listen as the deaf adder; but lay aside such foolish hopes, and tell me the circumstances which have contributed to convince you. And here comes your sister, who may help me, in trying to show you the folly of your conduct, and the unsoundness of

the grounds on which you have been persuaded. Here, Miriam, come and join with me, in proving to your brother how much wiser it is to follow the advice of the aged, than to hearken to the suggestions of one's own fancy; how much more reasonable it is, to abide by the sure word of God, than to adopt the opinions of the young, or to receive, without consideration, the novelties of every teacher.'

'My dear father,' replied *Sadoc*, with vehemence, 'you do not state the question fairly. I am following nothing new. I am merely endeavoring to comprehend the revelation which God has now made, of that which was long ago foretold in the book of life. Surely, to follow truth, if one sees it, is to follow the advice of the aged! or, to follow what is better than the advice of the aged, the advice of God, and of one's conscience!'

'While, Sadoc, you speak in that violent manner,' said *Miriam*, 'I am sure that I shall join against you. I see what has happened, and I have long foreseen it. Talbani has convinced you that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, and you are angry that my father is not persuaded at once, because your mind is satisfied. Surely your friend taught you sounder religion than this; he never mistook warmth for argument.'

‘We were just about,’ said *Nathan*, ‘to enter into a discussion concerning the prophecies relating to the Messiah, but perhaps *Miriam* is wiser than either of us. A practical sense of religion is the best step towards understanding its mysteries; and when we have cast aside our own prejudices, we are best able to judge of difficult questions. Our own preconceived opinions, when we are engaged in their support, are a greater hindrance to us than any real difficulties. They prevent us from being able to see the truth. Let us, therefore, dismiss these thoughts for the present, and delay the examination till the evening; and when we have supped, and thanked that Providence which supports our bodies as well as our souls, we will take down the sacred roll, and seek for an answer from the Word of God. In the mean season, *Miriam*, pray tell us what you have been doing? for I perceive that you have been employed about something.’

Miriam. ‘I have just returned from the chamber of *Sarah*, where I have been listening to her stories, and learning to make leaven.’

Sadoc. ‘I doubt not, then, that we shall enjoy the knowledge which you thus possess, in having much better bread. But pray let me know, too, how the process takes place; for I deem all knowledge useful, though I may never

use it, or wish to use it. Pray how does Sarah make leaven?’

Miriam. ‘She makes it very much as others do, and as she has always done. She takes some old dough from the last baking, which has become sour by fermenting, and mixing it with the new, she causes the whole to ferment together. But what I learnt from it was this: that if, while it was fermenting, the dough be moved, the whole process will be stopped, and must begin afresh; and I thought that as there seemed much ill-temper fermenting in your breast, I might take the leaven out, and let it wait till you were in a more fit temper to talk to my father.’

‘Well said, little philosopher,’ exclaimed *Nathan*, as he left the room. ‘You shall be our baker, and we will try to be well made by so excellent a house-wife. Sadoc, take care that you are not angry with her for so just a reproof.’

Sadoc. ‘How should I be angry with you, my dearest Miriam? I am in fault, and you have properly reproved me.’

‘That,’ replied *Miriam*, ‘is the very reason why I might expect that you would be angry. We bear reproof easily, when we do not deserve it. The task is then only difficult, when the blame is justly due. But enough of this.’

‘Enough of this,’ replied *Sadoc*, ‘for a hint from you is more likely to do me good than a long lecture; and now tell me what our old nurse has been relating to you. I do not know how it is, but with all her fancies and wearisome particulars, I still love her tales.’

‘You love them,’ said *Miriam*, ‘partly because you love her, and have been used to her. But her stories would long ago have lost their charm, if they had not always been founded on truth, and related with a strict agreement with human nature. It is always pleasant to know what any people really think, however absurd their thoughts may be. But in this case, she was giving an account of a miracle performed by Jesus of Nazareth, of which she was herself a witness.’

Sadoc. ‘Well then, dear *Miriam*, do tell me all she told you; for I am sure that no particulars can fail to be interesting.’

Miriam. ‘You had better come over to her yourself: she will be delighted to tell the story over again.’

They did so; and, after due objections raised on the part of the old nurse, to doing what she was well pleased to do, *Sarah* began as follows:—

Sarah. ‘It was about eighteen months ago that I went to a city of Galilee, of the name of

Nain, to see a cousin of mine, who lived near a poor old widow, who had an only son. The young man had been ill for some time before, and the misery of the poor woman was excessive. She had bred up this child in the hope that he would one day prove the support and comfort of her old age; for her means were very small, and she had diminished them considerably in order to supply her only son with the means of education. But it pleased God otherwise, and a few days after my coming there he died. As the old widow lived near the place where I was residing, and was well acquainted with the people of the house, I, as well as the other neighbors, was called in to take my share in the preparations for the funeral, which, poor soul, was of the very humblest description, since the widow could little bear even the ordinary expenses of the ceremony. When I arrived at the house, I joined with the rest of the women in washing the body and laying it out, covering it with flowers and sweet-smelling plants, for they could not afford to buy spices. The poor woman had sent some of her friends to see if they could prevail on the pipers and women mourners to attend the funeral; but they demanded so much money, that the poor creature was obliged, unwillingly, to omit this part of the ceremony,

though she anxiously desired to pay every honor to her child. There was, however, so strong a feeling on the part of the neighbors, that the funeral cry and lamentations were, if not quite so loud and vehement as usual, at least as heart-rending, and much more sincere. There were, indeed, no pipers as the procession moved towards the grave; but the procession itself, and the sadness of the followers, loudly called on every one who was passing to take part in a funeral office. The loud cries of the mourners were by no means indistinct or uncertain, and many strangers joined in the train and increased the wailing. We did not require any pipe to tell even those in the houses that the procession, which was passing through the street, was of some one who was loved, and honored in his death.'

Sadoc. 'Surely such tokens of affection and sincere grief are much more valuable than all the hired tumult of mourners and pipers. It may be very gratifying to the relations of the deceased to observe all who meet them join in the ceremony, and to hear the prayers and weeping of those from within the houses mingled with their own as they pass: but when such proofs of love arise from the music which accompanies the pomp, the constrained nature of it takes off entirely from the pleasure. The mother, I presume, was the chief mourner.'

Sarah. 'Yes, her mouth was covered with the veil of sorrow, but the loud and deep sobs which she uttered almost forced the bandage from her lips, and showed the upper part of her face; but her grief was too sincere and real to make her care for that, which others might have deemed an unbecoming circumstance in a mourner. She had few friends, for she was a lone woman in the world, and her only tie on earth was gone. Still, as I said, her case was so pitiable, that all the neighbors seemed sincerely to condole with her, and many of them had prepared the bread of men and the cup of consolation, in order to present them to her after her return from the grave, and when the violence of her grief should somewhat have passed away; but through the merciful kindness of your new Teacher, this was not necessary.'

'Alas,' replied *Sadoc*, 'he was not my Teacher then. Then I still turned a deaf ear to his instructions, and weighed not, and cared not for his miracles. But pray tell me what he did.'

Sarah. 'Why, as they were passing through the gate to carry out the corpse, he, accompanied with many followers, was approaching the city, and seemed to feel for the sorrows of the mother, and came up to her and said, 'Woman,

weep not.' The tone was so mild and gentle, that the interruption, even at this unseasonable moment, could not offend, and the poor woman's heart was comforted even in her tears. Then he went up to the bier, and, removing the cloth from the body, ordered the young man to arise. He spoke with all the gentleness of the kindest mourner; but it was with an authority which touched the hearts of all, and filled every bosom with gratitude and awe, when they beheld him who was dead sit up, and as it were again take his place among the living. I wish I could describe to you properly the mother's joy. But who can even imagine the joy of such a person? It was her only son, and she was a widow.'

Sadoc. 'Would to God that I had seen all this, for this would have convinced me at once: but thanks be to the Almighty that I have learnt even now to trust in him. And why should I say that this would have convinced me? Have I not lately seen whole crowds of people, who saw the rising again of our friend Lazarus, whose hearts are still hardened against the belief in Jesus?'

'Nay, rather say,' replied *Miriam*, 'why need I wonder at others, when we find within ourselves such foolish passions still abiding, even though we have learnt to believe on him? Yes, I confess that this story and your argu-

ments have quite convinced me. I do not think that I shall fully understand the reasoning drawn from prophecies; but it seems to me to require no such confirmation. I hear of the dead raised! that the blind are restored to sight. Must not he who does these things be God?’

Sadoc. ‘At that rate, you might prove Moses to be God. If Jesus should hereafter give his followers power to work miracles, they would still be only men. But when I look at Jesus himself, I cannot help believing him to be the Messiah sent from God — the Holy One — the Prophet like unto Moses. I cannot help esteeming him, “Our God, who is come to save us;” if, indeed, the passage in Isaiah is to be taken literally.’

Miriam. ‘Well, you must talk on this head with my father. For my part, I believe him to be a Teacher sent from God. As such I acknowledge him; as such I shall seek to receive instruction from him. But I shall be delighted to hear all you will have to tell us this evening.’

Sarah. ‘My dear young people, do take care what you are about. Have not all the Doctors decided that he is an impostor?’

Sadoc. ‘Could an impostor raise the dead?’

Sarah. ‘Why there is something in that remark; but yet they ought to know best.’

CHAPTER II.

THE sun was setting when Nathan and his children had finished their evening meal, which was composed of fried eggs and cheese, though the chief part of it consisted of flour and water, mixed with butter and honey, and baked in an oven. When they had thanked God for his mercies, prayed for a continuance of them, and read a portion of the law, 'Now, my dear son,' said *Nathan*, 'let us both entreat God that our hearts may be opened to the truth. You, perhaps, imagine that I am prejudiced against the Teacher, whom you believe not only to have come from God, but to be the Messiah. But, I assure you, I am only unwilling to admit so important a point, on inadequate testimony: prove that you have good grounds for your conclusion, and I will instantly assent to it: open the roll, therefore, which is before us, and read such prophecies as bear on the question.'

Sadoc. 'Forgive me, if I have been more eager in my arguing than I ought to be. I believe in Jesus, and deem that my salvation depends on my believing in him. Could you expect a son or a brother, who believes this, to be indifferent about persuading his father and his sister?'

Nathan. ‘Certainly not ; but I would advise him to be patient and temperate, if he hopes to convince them by argument, or to win them by love. My son, you know not how much you hinder your own success by your misplaced zeal. But, God grant that you may be moderate, and I patient. And now to the task.’

Sadoc. ‘It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to commence with those prophecies which merely relate generally to the promise of a future Messiah ; but still it may promote a clear understanding of the question, if we begin from the very first.’ He then read the following words: (Gen. iii. 15.) “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” ‘Now, though I do not fully comprehend the whole of this prophecy, yet it is here clearly declared, that one born of a woman shall destroy the power of the devil. But this would apply equally to any other deliverer, as well as to Jesus ; and, indeed, I should have omitted this prophecy altogether, if it had not appeared in some degree to militate against our generally received traditions with regard to the Messiah. Here is no peculiar promise given to one people more than to another ; whereas, among us, we are

always looking forward to a Prince, who shall exalt our nation.

‘The next promise is of nearly the same description. It is this, for I need hardly repeat the words*: — That in the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. And here, too, I cannot understand how this agrees with our notions of an earthly Deliverer, who is to free our nation only; for you see I allow of real difficulties, when they exist.

‘But, here I come to one which bears on the present question, and which strongly marks that the Messiah must have come on earth, at least by this time. When Israel blessed his sons, he used these words to Judah, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” (Gen: xlix. 10.) We well know that the government was much longer preserved in our tribe than in any other. The sceptre did depart from the ten tribes when they were carried into captivity, and has not since been restored to them; but among us, even while our fathers were in Babylon, their princes had power, and still exercised a sort of dominion: the sceptre had not then departed from us en-

* See Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14.

tirely. At present, however, since the death of Archelaus, this power is certainly taken from us. In these days we must bow to the proud arms and authority of Rome, and acknowledge ourselves enslaved to the sons of Italy. If, therefore, my interpretation of the word "sceptre" be the right one, Shiloh must be come.'

Nathan. 'I own that this is more than I had expected. Yet surely we must look for the Deliverer, not as a slave himself, but as one invested with sovereign power.'

Sadoc. 'This has undoubtedly been the expectation of our learned brethren; but I own that I have of late had my doubts whether we have any certain grounds for such a view of the promises. We must look at the whole as a whole, if we wish to discover the truth. I confess that there are difficulties for which I can find no satisfactory solution; but because I cannot understand every single point, I do not overlook that which I can comprehend, and which I see most evidently fulfilled. But to return: God promised Moses a prophet like unto him. — (Deut. xviii. 15.) "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." I cannot, indeed, yet see how Jesus resembles Moses, but I ex-

pect to discover this at some time or other; and to perceive how he is a lawgiver, and the mediator of a new covenant. But when I arrive at the prophecies of Isaiah, I seem to leave all my doubts behind me. Hear these verses, where he speaks of a virgin's conceiving. (Isaiah vii. 14.) "The Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."'

Nathan. 'But how do you know that this prophecy belongs to the Messiah?'

Sadoc. 'I do not know it with any degree of certainty, but it has always been understood so: I look for the fulfilment of some sign, and I find such a promise which I know has been accomplished in our own day. Jesus is called the son of Joseph, but he was in reality born before ever his parents came together.'

Nathan. 'Yet surely, my son, you cannot rest on these grounds and such as these.'

Sadoc. 'I do not rest on these grounds only. I have seen many miracles — many a proof of the presence of God; and I only refer such prophecies to the person whom I see to be invested with supernatural power; and I rest on the testimony of my own senses, trying my way by the written word of God.'

Nathan. 'Then why do you not look at those words of Scripture which are adverse to your

own ideas? Take a text almost which follows the one you have quoted: (Isaiah xi. 1.) "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Is he of Nazareth the son of Jesse?'

Sadoc. 'Why, my dear father, here you yourself mistake. Where did Herod send to destroy Jesus, when he was an infant? was it not to Bethlehem, the city of David? and why did he send there, but that Jesus was born there? Were we not conversing the other day on the murder of these poor innocents, who in their death proved that Jesus was the son of David? Did not his parents go up to enrol their names in their own city, the city of David, because they were of the house and lineage of David?'

Miriam. 'Dearest brother, do not be so earnest: will you convince any one by warmth?'

'Justly observed, dearest Miriam,' said *Nathan*; 'and though I am proved wrong in this text, your brother himself must allow that these words cannot apply to Jesus. (4.) "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." How can he judge who has no authority? How can he, of whom you speak, smite the earth with the rod of his mouth?'

Sadoc. 'The words need not apply exclusively to temporal power. There is a power in him whom you have never heard, which would confound the earth and all the proud reasoners of this world. May not this be the meaning of the Prophet?'

Nathan. 'Hear this, then. (10.) "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious." What is the meaning of the root of Jesse standing for an ensign of the people? how are the Gentiles to seek to it? and how is his rest to be glorious?'

Sadoc. 'I cannot pretend to interpret the prophecies which are not yet accomplished. I merely examine those which I now know to apply to the Messiah, and which are generally esteemed to do so; and I try to see whether these will apply to Jesus.'

Nathan. 'I believe that you are right; but still you cannot wonder if your argument, thus formed, do not carry with it instantaneous conviction.'

Sadoc. 'You will, however, acknowledge that this text is clear. (Isaiah xxxv. 3-6.) "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not. Behold your

God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.' The promise, you see, is that our God shall come and save us, and the signs are those very miracles which Jesus is constantly performing. The eyes of the blind Bartimeus are opened, — the ears of the deaf are unstopped, — the lame beggar, who sat in the gate of the temple, can now leap, — and the tongue of the dumb is unloosed; and all this by the power of Jesus of Nazareth.'

Nathan. I grant that this is a most striking coincidence; but pray how is the first part accomplished? How is our God come to save us? Whatever you may call your Teacher, you do not deem him to be God.'

Sadoc. 'I deem him to be the Son of God. Do not the very devils, when they come out at his command, do they not address him as the Son of God? Did not the people take up stones to cast at him, because he called himself the Son of God? His miracles prove that he comes from God: he says that he is the Son of God, at least his hearers understand him so;

and have not I, who see all this, every reason for believing that our God is come to save us?'

'Again — when I look at the portions of this same prophet which describe the sufferings of the Messiah, I cannot but remember and think of him of Nazareth. I do not understand yet how all these words have been or shall be accomplished, but I see enough to make me think of Jesus. (Isaiah liii. 2–3.) "He shall grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not." Could any words mark out more strongly the outward circumstances of him in whom I believe? I see, indeed, other expressions which follow this, of which I cannot yet perceive the force; but I look forward of being able to understand them at some time. The faith on which I rely is built on what I have myself seen and heard, and on what I have learnt from others. The prophecies confirm all this; but they were given not to make us foresee, for then would they have been given more plainly, — but to make us see, when the event has come to pass, that it

was the Lord's doing; that the whole and every particular was not only foreknown, but foretold by almighty wisdom.

'We are now come to that prophecy from which I derive my strongest argument, yet concerning which I must acknowledge that I am in many respects still in the dark. The words stand thus: (Daniel ix. 24-26.) "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again and the wall, even in troublous times: and after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." Now, as every prophetic day will answer to a natural year, when we have fixed the point of time at which this prophecy began, we shall have to count 490 years to the anointing the Most Holy, the Messiah, the Prince. And here are to me two difficulties—one as to the date, the other as to the cutting off of the Messiah, of which expression I hardly understand the meaning. We

have been always taught to view the promised Deliverer as a victorious prince — some second David. How then is he to be cut off, but not for himself? This I confess I do not understand; and as to the date, you, my father, must give me all the aid you can.'

Nathan. 'This is a subject on which I have before often thought, and I shall most readily assist you in searching for the truth.

'There are, in my opinion, three periods, at one of which we must suppose the prophecy to commence. The events connected with them are recorded in the following places of Scripture: (Ezra i. 1.)

'First, when Cyrus gave his decree for the rebuilding of the temple: but that took place nearly 570 years ago; and it pertained rather to the building of the house of God in Jerusalem, than to the circumstances which are alluded to in the words of Daniel, the rebuilding the street in troublous times.

'Secondly, when Artaxerxes made his decree, and wrote the letter to Ezra (vii. 11, &c.) which was exactly 490 years from this period, at which we are talking; and,

'Thirdly, when Artaxerxes sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem, which was fourteen years afterwards. (Nehemiah ii. 7.) And though this coincidence of the second date makes a strong

impression on my mind, I must acknowledge that there is so much in this prophecy which I do not comprehend, that I should be sorry for any one to build their faith on this alone. I know that the wisest of our Doctors do always interpret it of the Expected Prince, and this has made them generally look forward to some great deliverer at this moment; but do you see what the cutting off of the Messiah can mean?’

Sadoc. ‘No, I do not; but fear not, dearest father, our faith is not left to doubtful prophecies. My mind rests on his miracles. It rests on his teaching, or rather, it now rests on what I feel within myself. His words tell me, every day, that he knows my most secret thoughts: they tell me of my own heart more than I know myself concerning it. The evidence of prophecy seems to confirm all that is passed, but it was hardly intended to guide us as to the future; and much as I feel delighted when I can unravel the mysteries of God’s wisdom, I always remain contented in the hope, that at some period I shall see my way more clearly even on those points wherein I now entertain doubts.’

Nathan. ‘You are quite right in your view of prophecy. But, when I look at the Teacher whom you thus hold up to me, I cannot forget that he is a Galilean; and shall any prophet come out of Galilee?’

Sadoc. 'This part of the argument was thrown into confusion by my haste, and Miriam's just reproof. Jesus, you know, is not a Galilean: he was born at Bethlehem, as Micah foretels, (v. 2.) "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

'I do not know how far you will admit the force of my next prophecy, but to me it is most convincing. The words are of Haggai, (ii. 9.) who is speaking of the second temple. "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." This outwardly has not, and cannot be fulfilled; for the splendor of the second temple is much less than that of the first. But, if Jesus be the Son of God, — if the Son of God has taught within these walls, — is not this a greater glory than any of the gold of Solomon, or the peculiar favors with which the former temple was adorned; the ark of the covenant, the Shechinah, the Urim and Thummim, the sacred fire, or even the Spirit of Prophecy?'

Nathan. 'All this evidence surprises me: but why, with all this evidence, have none of

the Scribes and Pharisees believed on him? It does seem to me, either that your evidence must be defective in some points wherein I cannot discover the fallacy, or that many of the Rulers would have believed on Jesus.'

Sadoc. 'My dear father, have I not found much difficulty in persuading even you to listen to my arguments thus far? I rejoice to see your eyes opened even as far as they are opened: but is not this very blindness and opposition foretold? Does not Isaiah begin his prophetic description by saying, (liii. 1.) "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" There have been revelations enough, but have not our brethren shut their eyes against them? Have they not fulfilled these other words of Isaiah? (vi. 9.) "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed." Has not this judicial blindness fallen on them? And when we look around us, and see the way in which the visible testimonies in favor of Jesus have been rejected by the people of Judah, can we wonder at this blindness? Can we be surprised if God suffer their eyes to be closed?'

Nathan. 'I own that I am much struck with your evidence. It is not so direct, so definito, as I should have expected to find the testimony in favor of the true Messiah; it is not so clear: but I admit that several points are established by you; and I do not wonder that the evidence appears very differently to you, who have listened to his teaching, and seen his miraculous works, than to me, who have purposely avoided doing so.'

Sadoc. 'The points which I esteem clearly established, are these. That at this time, we have good reason to look for the Anointed, the Messiah. The prophecy of Daniel must be near its accomplishment. Secondly, that Shiloh must be come, for the sceptre has departed from Judah.'

'These two points,' said *Nathan*, 'I grant.'

Sadoc. 'Next, then, the ruler was to be born at Bethlehem. Jesus was born there, and the fact has been clearly brought to the notice of every one, by the murder of the children.'

Nathan. 'This I grant; but, after all, it does not amount to much.'

Sadoc. 'By itself it does not; but we must combine many concurring testimonies. So, again, the Messiah was to be of the family of Abraham, and of David. Jesus is of this family.'

'A prophet was promised like to Moses: that is, a lawgiver like him. Jesus is come in

a way, and with an authority far different from that of any other prophet.'

Nathan. 'This I partly grant; but I do not see how Jesus is a lawgiver like Moses: he changes not the laws and institutions of the country.'

Sadoc. 'I do not quite see it myself; but, if you remember, Moses did not change the institutions at once, — it was after a time: but to return. Though there are many prophecies concerning the Messiah's glory, — though we always look to him as a king, a son of David, — yet there are many prophecies which speak of the sufferings of some great person, and I own, that being otherwise convinced that Jesus is the Messiah, I am disposed to apply them to him.'

Nathan. 'We have allowed the moon to pass on many a degree in the circle of heaven, while we have been carrying on this friendly argument; and I will now retire and meditate thereon by myself in my closet. And may the same Spirit of Truth which guided the pens of the prophets, open our hearts to understand these things. The blessing of the Most High be on you both, my dearest children: — roll up the volume, Sadoc, and place it in the chest.'

CHAPTER III.

NATHAN, after his conversation with Sadoc, had passed a restless and distracted night, relieved by short slumbers, and harrassed by feverish dreams. His reason had been partially convinced, but his wishes had hardly advanced together with his convictions, and he dreaded to believe, or not to believe, that his son was right. In this temper of mind, he early left his couch, and proceeded before day-break to the house of his friend Darkon, with whom he had long lived on terms of the strictest intimacy, and for whose learning and opinions he entertained the highest respect. He did not quite wish to open his whole mind to his friend; for his mind was secretly ashamed of its own weakness, in being convinced as far as it was; but he wished, by entering on the subject of the prophecies and of the new Teacher, to draw forth from one, who was esteemed the wisest of the Pharisees, the most striking arguments on the other side of the question. He went, not with the honest view of discovering the truth, but with the secret desire of having his own prejudices confirmed by the superior knowledge of his learned friend. These were his thoughts as he advanced towards the dwelling of Dar-

kon: but when he had entered into his presence, he knew not how to commence the conversation. To begin at once to speak of Jesus was to display an anxiety which he rather wished to conceal; and he felt that, in the present state of his own sentiments, it would be more prudent to say nothing of his misgivings. When, therefore, he was introduced into the room, he hesitated how he should account for his visit, while the unusually early hour at which it was made, seemed to render some species of apology necessary: but the friendly greeting and salutation of Darkon rendered further deliberation impossible, and after one or two unsuccessful attempts, he was forced to say something of the fineness of the morning, and the pleasure of rising early. The owner of the house perceived his confusion, but entertained no suspicion as to the real cause of his embarrassment, and, hastily forming a solution of his own, concluded that the father was come on some errand relating to the marriage of his son, — a topic on which Darkon was quite willing to enter, as Sadoc was gifted in no ordinary degree with many of the qualities which the old Pharisee admired, — was beloved by Hatipha, — and the wealth of Nathan was fully known to common fame. ‘Well then,’ said *Darkon*, smiling, ‘as I conclude you did not

come thus far, and thus early, to tell me you thought early rising a pleasure, or that the day was fine, I will open the way to what I suppose you really wish to say. How fares it with our young friend Sadoc?'

'Sadoc,' replied *Nathan*, 'what makes you mention him? He is very well; at least he was so last night.'

Darkon. 'What, had you any particular conversation with him last night? for he never came near us yesterday, and I do not think that I have missed seeing him, a single day, these three months.'

Nathan. 'Conversation with Sadoc? Why, what should make you think that I had any conversation with him?'

'Nothing but a guess,' replied *Darkon*, 'and the knowledge of the fact that he was not here last night as usual.'

Nathan knew not how to proceed. He could not imagine how *Darkon* could have known any thing of the discourse of the previous evening: the confusion of the moment hindered him from perceiving that *Darkon* was equally at fault; and he expected some overture concerning his daughter. At length, after some half-silence, half-talking about nothing, *Darkon* began to fancy that *Nathan* wished to speak to his wife, and offered to take him to

that part of the house where the women resided. Nathan, eager to escape the difficulty in which he found himself involved, from mistaking the object of Darkon's questions, gladly consented to the proposal, and they quickly arrived at the chamber occupied by Rhoda and her daughter Hatipha. Here Nathan found his embarrassment increased, rather than diminished; for the real mistake of Darkon now flashed upon him, and he was about to solve all his difficulties by a precipitate retreat, when, after a few compliments, the old lady broke the ice, by observing, that she supposed that Nathan had been at the Sanhedrim when that noble decree was proposed by Darkon, that all who professed themselves to be followers of Jesus of Nazareth should be put out of the synagogue. She, good woman, like other politic matrons, desired not to appear anxious on a point on which her whole cares were fixed; and, seeking for something to say which was unconnected with the only thought which she wished to conceal, little foresaw how far from her intention the conversation would turn.

‘Do you call it noble?’ said *Nathan*, drily. ‘To refute erroneous opinions is learned,—to give up one’s own interest is magnanimous,—to conquer one’s own prejudices is great,—

to do well, and to suffer for it patiently, is truly noble; but how this decree comes under either of these heads, I own I do not see.'

Darkon. 'You are rather hard upon my old wife. She merely characterized that as noble which was necessary and useful, and saw the act in its most favorable view, because it was her husband's.'

'It might be a necessary decree,' replied *Nathan*; 'that must depend on other considerations; and, if useful, I am glad that my friend was the author of it: but I own that I would rather have seen him prove that Jesus is an impostor, than assume it, and then punish those whose opinions do not coincide with his own.'

Darkon. 'What, my good Sir, do you mean to advocate the cause of the Galilean?'

'Galilean!' retorted *Nathan*. 'Now this is just one of those points which his followers would deny. They say he was born at Bethlehem, where the Messiah ought to be born. Do not suppose I am come to advocate his cause; but I verily believe that the wisdom of such a man as you are, would be more usefully employed in convincing good, quiet sort of people, such as I am, than in punishing those ignorant fanatics who believe in him, and who, after all, do not create any great evil.'

Darkon. 'If men who have been brought up under the law of Moses, cannot understand the

futility of the pretensions of such a man as this, no learning of mine can assist them. Does not every child know, that the coming of the Messiah is to be declared by outward signs from heaven? Does not every one know, that the Great Deliverer, whom God will send, is to be of the house of David? A Mighty Prince, a Conqueror? Can they, then, be so blind as to look for all this in the person of a companion of fishermen, and of publicans and sinners?’

‘Why, every old woman in the country,’ quickly added *Rhoda*, ‘knows enough to confute such pretensions as his. I shall begin to suspect that you, too, are a follower of this Jesus.’

Nathan. ‘Your suspicions are your own; but I believe it would puzzle the theology of both mother and daughter to prove to me from Scripture, that the Messiah will not come without outward signs from heaven, or to point out to me any passage, which a follower of Jesus, who had well learnt his task, might not attribute to a spiritual kingdom. What does my old lady say to this challenge?’ ‘Say to it,’ replied *Rhoda*, ‘why, that you make it, trusting to the weakness of your adversary, and not to your own strength. Hatipha, you know, will not argue, or bring texts, against you; but if

she would honestly assist me, I would undertake the cause myself. But I shall transfer it to my husband, who I see has already found out something to the purpose. Help your father, Hatipha, in holding open the roll.'

'My good friend,' said *Darkon*, 'I have here the Psalms. Look at that one which begins, "Why do the heathen so furiously rage together?" (ii.) and observe the conclusion of it. You will here acknowledge that the writer is speaking of the Messiah.'

'Certainly,' said *Nathan*.

'Well, then, look at the latter part,' continued *Darkon*, (8-12); "Desire of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance; and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron; and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now, therefore, oh ye kings;" and so on. How can all this be true of Jesus?'

Nathan. 'This part is not true of him, now; but look at the beginning. Are not the people, are not the heathen raging against him? Are not even kings and rulers taking counsel against him? If the former part be true of him now, why may not the latter prove so hereafter?'

Darkon. 'Look, then, at that psalm which begins, "Give the king thy judgments." (lxxii.) This psalm was not wholly fulfilled either in

David or Solomon; and, therefore, most of the doctors have interpreted it as belonging, in a more particular manner, to the Messiah.'

'This,' said *Nathan*, 'is my view of the subject.'

Darkon. 'Then can you apply the words here spoken of the Messiah, to Jesus of Nazareth?'

Nathan. 'I certainly cannot apply them now; but I do not see why we may not hereafter be able to say, (8,) "His dominion shall be from one sea to the other, and from the flood unto the world's end."'

Darkon. 'Take, then, this prophecy from Isaiah (ix. 6): "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice from henceforth, even forever." Now, is one word of all this applicable to Jesus? and do you not deem it to belong to the Messiah?'

'I grant both,' replied *Nathan*. 'I acknowledge that I do not fully understand it now: but why may not this prove, hereafter, true of

Jesus? You cannot deny the more than human power with which he acts. You hear of, and cannot deny, his miracles; why should you deem it impossible that he who can raise the dead, who can cure all diseases, and calm the stormy waves,—why may not he, at some time, destroy his enemies with the breath of his nostrils, and establish his kingdom on earth?’

Darkon. ‘Why may he not? Why may not David himself come again? Why may not he who can listen to such reasoning believe anything? If you will but examine it, your argument amounts to just this: All that favors Jesus, you apply to him as your Messiah; all that is against his pretensions, that is, nine-tenths of the word of God, you say you cannot interpret yet.’

Nathan. ‘Nay, you do not state the question fairly. You will not stay to give yourself time to examine it. I myself came here to be convinced, to be strengthened by your advice, by your greater knowledge; and I find you less ready to listen to reason, even than those who advocate the other side. I think in a great measure as you do, that this Jesus may be a deceiver; but I do not regard the matter exactly as you do. I, as well as you, expect a great prince, one who shall re-establish our nation in all the glories of David; but I wish

to be fully persuaded that this expectation is well grounded, and I own I do not see this point clearly laid down in any part of Scripture which you have brought forward. There may be such passages, no doubt, and I have always entertained this expectation myself; but when I hear the accounts which are given me of the miracles performed by this Jesus, I cannot but feel anxious to examine the grounds on which my opinions rest. I would not say that I doubt; but I should like to be so provided in my own mind, that I might never suffer a doubt to arise.'

Darkon. 'If you will not abide by the decisions of the elders, the decidedly expressed opinions of your more learned brethren of the Sanhedrim, there will be constant ground for doubting. You say you have always entertained the same sentiments as the rest of the Pharisees; why, then, doubt now?'

Nathan. 'I do not doubt; but I wish to have my understanding enlightened, lest I should doubt. I came to you in order to be so fortified in my faith, but I find no proofs advanced by you. I want to know, therefore, what you, and others like you, think of these miracles.'

Darkon. 'Think of them? that they are chiefly false, chiefly no miracles at all, but mere deceptions; and that if any real cures

have been performed, they must have been accomplished by the power of Beelzebub.'

Nathan. 'Have you seen any yourself?'

'I see them!' said *Darkon*, in anger, 'I see them! Go yourself and listen to the tales of old wives and women. Believe what nurses tell, and fools hearken to. Never shall *Darkon* so betray his dignity as to regard the deceits of the Galilean as worthy of examination or confutation.'

'Nay, be not angry, my friend,' replied *Nathan*; 'I own that I wish to search and examine everything, and then to hold fast that which is true; and as both of us wish for the truth, as doubtless you think you do, I cannot say I like this method of pursuing it.'

'When,' answered *Darkon*, 'I am sure in my own mind, I never like to allow any doubts even to arise. I think it due to God to trust in his word, and not to question it.'

Nathan. 'Yes, his word; but the question is, how does his word decide this point?'

Rhoda had long waited with impatience; for though her strong prejudices had carried her away at first, so that she only wished to cast reproaches on the new teacher, yet as she saw that her husband was in a passion, and that *Nathan* was cool, she had quite sense enough to discover, that theological discussions, though

carried on on the best principles, were not likely to advance the friendly settling of a marriage-contract; and much as she wished ill to the Galilean, she wished well to her daughter, her husband, her friend; and particularly she wished well to herself, and the accomplishment of a plan which had long been firmly seated in her heart. — Rhoda thought that at this moment there was an opportunity for a truce, and eagerly desired to introduce any subject which might mitigate the rising displeasure of both parties, and promote her own private object. Her pharisaical prejudices were fully satisfied, when she heard Nathan declare that he conceived that Jesus might be an impostor, and she exclaimed, —

‘Now see how it always is with you men ! You are not contented to be of the same mind, unless each of you is of the same mind for the same reasons. It is not enough for two men to do the same good, unless they can do it in the same way, and on the same grounds; and when they come together, instead of doing the good that each might perform, they fall to quarrelling about the manner in which they shall do it. You both of you are against this Galilean. Why dispute, then, as to what you think of some of his acts? Join together, heart and soul, in opposing him, and look after your own fami-

ly concerns, as good men ought to do, and leave the rest to the Sanhedrim.'

'To God, you ought to have said, my good lady,' said *Nathan*.

Rhoda. 'Well, to God, if you please it; provided you do not waste your time in disputing, but can talk quietly on what brought you here.'

Nathan. 'Why I protest that nothing brought me here, but the wish to talk a little with your good husband; and we have been almost quarrelling without much reason, and I dare say they are waiting for me at home, for I had not broken a morsel of bread when I came out.'

'Nay,' replied *Rhoda*, 'our house were most inhospitable if it could not furnish you with all you would eat at this early hour. A wise man leaveth not his house without breaking bread; and if you will add to your bread, milk and honey, we can easily furnish you. *Hatipha* and myself have already done as much, so that we need not retire from the chamber, and you may refresh yourself without our being forced to leave you; and if you will remain and dine with us, we shall be most pleased with your company, and you may get away before noon.'

Nathan. 'Many thanks. I will break bread, lest you should think that I depart in wrath; but I must go home, for I have many things to think of.'

‘Go home! What now?’ exclaimed *Darkon* and *Rhoda*. ‘What, came you here merely to talk about the Galilean? Then, surely,’ added *Rhoda*, ‘you must have some faith in him, at least.’

Hatipha had retired from the conversation before her mother was aware of it; for, conscious of the impression which had been made on the mind of *Sadoc*, she dreaded the disclosure, yet half lingered to hear it made; while a sort of consciousness that her own name might be mentioned, with reference to another point, induced her to retire, notwithstanding the anxiety which she could not help feeling on both these topics. When, therefore, *Nathan* departed, *Darkon* and *Rhoda* were left alone.

‘Why now,’ said *Rhoda*, ‘if I can hardly believe my senses. If this good man, *Darkon*, is not driven away by your rude attacks upon his orthodoxy. As if every man must think exactly as you do, or else be a heretic. *Nathan* came to talk about the marriage of *Hatipha* with his son. I have no doubt of it; and you have turned him out of the house by the vehemence of your arguing. He does not believe in the Prophet of Nazareth any more than you do, but he is not quite so unwilling to listen to anything; and being half offended at your uncivil way of treating him, he is gone

away without saying one word on the subject which brought him here.'

Darkon. 'I did certainly suppose that the marriage was the object of his coming, but I verily believe, too, that the soreness with which he bore my attacks arose from some other cause than his anxiety about my reasonableness. I cannot help thinking that he is himself a believer, but secretly, for fear of the law which we have passed.'

Rhoda. 'Pray talk more sense than this. Nathan, the prudent, the aged, the cautious Nathan, a believer in the Impostor? I would as soon believe that Hatipha was.'

Darkon. 'Believe what you please. I cannot conceive that he would have taken the matter so much to heart, if he had not been a believer, and that pretty much tinged too. I cannot help fearing that Sadoc has not been quite sound for some time; and you may well guess the consequences of his being converted. If he turns, how long will Hatipha be with us.'

'Always,' said *Rhoda*.

'Yes, always,' replied *Darkon*, 'as far as obedience is concerned. She will always obey us outwardly, but how will her conscience stand? Believe me, you women cannot see into the depths of these new-fashioned doctrines. If heaven and hell do really depend on believ-

ing on this deceiver, as his followers declare, how shall any one be able to trust even his own brother, his son, his wife, or himself? ’

Rhoda. ‘ I think I may trust you, Darkon.’

Darkon. ‘ Trust me or not, nothing but the sternest severity will save our sinking faith. I must go to the Sanhedrim, and see that my decree is put into execution. If such men as Nathan can argue against it—dare argue against it—what may not others do? ’

The mind of Nathan, as he proceeded homeward, was agitated with many conflicting feelings. ‘ Now truly,’ said he to himself, if violence is to assume to itself the merit of reason; if this wise man is to show his wisdom by no other method than by refusing to listen to anything which can be adduced against him, one had better die with the character of a fool. The arguments of my son left a strong impression on my mind; and if Darkon has to-day brought forward all that can be adduced on the other side, surely Sadoc’s interpretation of the prophecies does not admit of a moment’s hesitation. If all that can be brought against Jesus is to show, that great things are spoken of the Messiah, that a great kingdom and power are promised him, and that these things are not yet fulfilled; why, as I urged in the discussion, why may he not yet accomplish all these things?

Is anything too hard for him who can raise the dead? Why may not he who has given such abundant proof that God is with him—why may he not, on any day, call down the host of heaven to destroy his enemies, and to establish that kingdom which is the fervent hope and expectation of all the Jews? — I shall not yet,' continued he to reason in his own thoughts, 'I shall not yet disclose my sentiments to my children; but I am infinitely more disposed to listen to Sadoc, since I have heard all that Darkon can advance on the other side. But what then is to become of my poor son's marriage? In truth, I see not my way out of all the difficulties which surround us. But God is merciful, and the wisest of men guide not their affairs with half the wisdom which he displays in our favor.' So reasoned the heart of the pious old man; and as he half reasoned, half prayed, he came to his home.

CHAPTER IV.

WHILE Nathan had been engaged in the preceding conversation with Darkon, Sadoc and Miriam had long continued to wait for him.

They had spent part of the time in pacing on the house-top, and looking towards the street through which they had seen him go. Their conversation chiefly turned on the subject which was most interesting to both of them, for they had mutually acknowledged that they believed in Jesus, though the grounds of their faith had been widely different, and the measure of it by no means equal.

‘You speak,’ said *Miriam*, ‘in such ecstasies, whenever you talk of Jesus. You do not seem to be quite reasonable about it.’

Sadoc. ‘If you could hear him teach; if you could hear him reprove; if you could hear him give proofs of his kindness, you would feel as I do; and feeling so, would express yourself with the same earnestness.’

Miriam. ‘So you always say. Yet my mind has not yet arrived at this point. I have no doubt that the reasons which you give me why I should esteem him the Messiah are quite unanswerable; yet I feel no such warmth.’

Sadoc. ‘Your reason has more to do with your faith, than your affections. You must learn to love him, and then your heart will glow at the mention of his name. I will only relate one event which I witnessed, and which struck me so forcibly, that I do not know that I have ever really doubted since, and yet it added

nothing to the conviction of my reason. I was standing in the temple, listening to his teaching, and a crowd of Scribes and Pharisees was near. I was building up my own mind with all the arguments I could muster, to resist the half-yielding resolutions of my heart. I was determined not to believe, not to be convinced. I was in such a temper that God might most justly have left me to myself, and my own blindness; but it pleased him to do otherwise. At this moment they brought in a woman taken in adultery; and I rejoiced, since I thought that Jesus must now be baffled. Either this merciful and gentle Teacher will set aside the law of Moses, and forgive this woman, and then I shall be sure that he is not sent from God; or he will be forced to condemn her, and then his pretensions to being the revealer of a new doctrine will be shaken. Here, thought I, is a case where I shall see the truth of this pretended Messiahship brought to the test, and found wanting.'

Miriam. 'Well, and what did he do?'

Sadoc. 'It was a long time before he would attend to what was said; and I wickedly thought within myself, surely he sees the difficulty, and will not answer the question; and as I thought so, he raised himself, and said, "Let him that is without sin, first cast a stone at her." I

knew the wickedness of my own thoughts at the moment; I felt how I was even now withstanding God. I thought on former circumstances of my own life, and my heart sunk within me. I dared not presume to cast a stone. With all her sins, thought I to myself, with all her sins, she may be, in the sight of God, far less guilty than I am; and as this thought passed through my mind, I found that I had retired behind one of the pillars of the temple, and was making my way out as fast as I could. I was ready to sink into the earth, and the idea which pressed upon me was, Where shall I fly from my offended Maker? Where shall I retire to pray? When I have retired to my closet, will the Lord of heaven and earth hear the petitions of such a wretch as I am? — I did find a place to pray, for I ran hastily home; and I did pray, so as I never prayed before, and perhaps never may pray again. I prayed as to an angry God, who was about to destroy me; but I prayed to a God, who in mercy heard me, and, thanks be to him, I am what I am.'

Miriam. 'But did Jesus then acquit the woman? for I presume that no one began to cast a stone at her.'

Sadoc. 'No; for this was the very question which I afterwards asked. No; when all had done as I had done, and were gone, he said

unto her, "Woman, hath no man condemned thee? — Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Tell me not of miracles after this. There may be a stronger conviction in the mind of the ignorant, the unbeliever, from beholding miracles; but let a man clearly understand the moral government of the world, and the object of all punishment; let him examine all the methods which human skill has invented for correcting the offender, or for preventing crime in others; let him trace all the effects of severity and terror, or of caution and prevention, and all shall fall far below this one instance of heavenly wisdom. How many were convicted in her conviction! Every one of us who heard. How many were condemned! Every one of us. Should we go and sin? Should we deem that no sufficient check had been imposed upon us? God forbid! There is no terror which I would not have suffered far more readily than the anguish which came upon me when I retired and said to my own heart, Alas! how much greater a sinner mayest thou be than this poor woman! Had she all the advantages which you possessed? Had she all the warnings which you have again and again transgressed; against which you have hardened your heart? — I never felt what it was to grieve for my sins till that day. Was

she likely to fall into fresh acts of sin? Ask her what she experienced when he said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Was it gratitude which predominated in her mind? No, there was something more strong than that. Was it joy at escaping? No; it was self-abasement too. She was hardened by being brought before the public gaze: her heart was as the flint stone. Here are, said she within herself, here are these ungodly sinners, whose hypocrisy conceals their offences from the public eye; who would destroy me, even at the moment when their foul souls are longing to enjoy the sinful indulgence for which they would condemn me to execrations and this dreadful death. The passion which ruled within her breast, was stern hate and malicious anger against her hypocritical accusers. But when Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more;" her proud spirit was broken, and she prayed in her heart, Lord, bless thee for thy mercy, and teach me never to offend again. Oh, Miriam, the more and more I think of this evidence of a Teacher sent from God, the more am I convinced that I rest on sure grounds. I may be mistaken about prophecies; I may be deceived about miracles, if that indeed were possible; but I cannot mistake this. Such an administration of a holy

and just law; such justice tempered with mercy never came from human wisdom; and far less could the enemy of mankind have used such armor, as was never brought from any other armory than that of heaven. I may, I say, not understand prophecy; I may be deceived in miracles; I cannot be deceived in this.'

Miriam. 'Now truly, Sadoc, I do not see all this. The story is a beautiful one; but why must this act have proceeded from more than human power? The prophecies are to me less plain as an evidence, for I do not wholly understand them; many of them I hardly comprehend at all. This proof of the divinity of your Teacher, I confess, I do not fully see. But the miracles strike me most forcibly, even though I have never seen them.'

Sadoc. 'I must confess that different persons are differently affected with different species of proof. The prophecies are rather a confirmation to those who believe, than a means of leading any one to believe; and yet some persons may be convinced by the prophecies, as I trust that my father has been in part. I own that, with regard to myself, miracles rather bore down my unbelief, than established my faith. I could not gainsay them, but my heart did not receive them with sincerity. Then came this case of the mercy of Jesus, the wis-

dom which he showed, and that perfect knowledge of all our wants, of all our infirmities, which every act of his displays; and, thanks be to God, my heart gave way, and I am what I am.'

After this there was a long pause, and they continued to pace the roof of the house, each pursuing that concatenation of ideas which their own minds suggested, and which presently led the thoughts of each from the same common point to such a distance that they neither of them knew how to renew the conversation, and would most probably have remained in silence, had not Sadoc remembered that he had an appointment to meet Talbai, and that he had promised to escort his sister to the house of Gahar; and he suddenly recommenced, by rallying his sister, and saying, —

Sadoc. 'You said that you wished to visit the house of Gahar. Pray, which is it you want to see, his wife or daughter? and on what subject do you intend to discourse?'

Miriam. 'Cease your railing, and take me there; or perhaps I shall ask you why you always turn to the eastward when you quit my father's court?'

Sadoc. 'Well, I say no more. Now, at least, I shall go to the westward; for I have promised to meet Talbai, and to visit the spot

where Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac; and in going there I must pass by Gahar's house, and will call for you as I return: let us leave word for my father, and lose no more time.'

When Miriam entered the door of Gahar, she found the master of the house and his son, Asnah, engaged in conversation in the ante-chamber; and, after a short salutation on the part of Sadoc, who quickly proceeded on his way, she was about to move forward into the apartments of the women, when *Gahar*, who had always treated her as his own child, took her by the hand, and said, 'I must make you decide this controversy between us; at least, you must hear it. I cannot persuade Asnah that he is very foolish in allowing himself to think so much about this Jesus of Nazareth as a teacher sent from God. What matters it whether he be a true prophet or no? Nothing can be more foolish than to enter into controversial questions, whence nothing but strife can spring, and which make all who engage in them morose, and friendly neither to God nor man. What folly to make this life miserable, in the uncertain expectation of another!'

Miriam. 'What use can it be to begin again these observations, which you know that I have in vain attempted to answer frequently before?

My good father has always been a firm believer in a life to come, and has brought us up in the same faith. Why, then, try to deprive us of this best of hopes?’

Gahar. ‘My dear child, I have no wish to take from you your hopes; I only wish my son not to sell his certainty of this life for the blind chance of another; not to trust to the promises of a fanatic. I wish him to do the will of God, and not to disturb his mind about matters which he cannot understand, and which are, in truth, of no use to be understood. Judge for yourself: there is old Darkon; a kinder-hearted man does not exist in the world than he is by nature; but since he has taken up the opposition to this new Teacher, what can be more violent, more unreasonable, than he has become? I do believe that he would quarrel with your father or with me, his oldest friends and companions, if he could imagine for one moment that we believed this Jesus to be the Messiah. What greater folly can one conceive to exist? For myself, I examine little, and care little whether the words of this Galilean be true or false; and while I follow the path before me, I am contented to pluck all the fragrant flowers within my reach, and to reject those which are less agreeable. What says my fair child? Why I see that you are little

pleased with this discourse, and I cannot help thinking that you are in league with Asnah here. I can hardly get him to answer one word to my arguments, and I do believe that, if he thought that Jesus was a true prophet, he would give up even you, Miriam, and run all dangers;—yet somehow or other, after all, there is too much of his father in him, to suffer him to be guilty of such fanaticism as this.'

'You know,' replied *Miriam*, 'that I do not like to enter into questions of this sort with those who ought to know much better than I can do; but I own that, to search for the truth seems in reality wiser than to be contented with a falsehood.'

Gahar. 'But if the falsehood be a pleasing dream, the truth a sad reality, why open one's eyes sooner than one can help? Here are you young people, whose fathers have destined you for each other during many a year, who love each other sincerely, and here, out of a fanciful matter of opinion, you are persuaded to run risks, merely to please your own vanity. Be he Messiah, or be he not, this world lies before you, and why trouble your heads about any thing else? Why cannot you be contented to believe as I and Nathan have always believed? What matters it, as to who is the Messiah or no? Sure am I, that I have lived well enough,

without troubling myself about the point. Sure am I, that Darkon would be a happier and a better man, if he did not act so vehemently against this Jesus; and that Nicodemus would have had no reason to repent if he had not believed in him so much. But I see you do not like my conversation. Why look so sadly at me, Miriam? One smile before we part. Do have charity enough to fancy that a Sadducee may be a good sort of person, even though your father is a Pharisee.'

While Asnah led Miriam towards his mother's apartments, they passed through a court in which there was an abundance of flowers, and he delayed for a moment in order to gather some of them; and as he gave them, said, 'Pray do look more pleased before my sisters see you; they will fancy that we have been quarrelling: do put on your lovely, placid look. It grieves me to the heart to see you so. I dread my father's raillery, you always seem so angry at me.'

Miriam. 'It is not anger, it is sorrow: when I hear a father talk thus, how can I imagine that the son entertains more sound opinions? You know that I love you; why should I attempt to deny it; but how dare I hope for the blessing of God on a connexion, when I hardly feel assured that you are a believer in God?'

Asnah. 'And now I am to have more of your pharisaical prejudices. I do not think exactly as you think; and, therefore, according to your interpretation of the matter, I do not believe in God. May not a reasonable man think somewhat differently from your father, or rather from Darkon, without being an unbeliever? You know that my faith in the word of God, as far as I know it to be the word of God, is as firm as yours. If I do not receive all the traditions of the doctors, am I, therefore, less firm in my belief of what God has revealed? I have often told you that nothing can be less fair than to measure my opinions by the words of my father; but you would not have a son controvert his father's doctrines, especially when he can hardly do so, without being guilty of the same unkindness of sentiment towards him, as you so freely indulge in towards a man whom you say that you love; but you have forced me to speak out, and between ourselves, if my creed were the same as that of my father, perhaps the terms which your haste has sometimes applied to me, would not be so unfairly used. But this is said once for all; I cannot talk on such a subject without dishonoring a parent; and if I must be mistaken, I must also bear it patiently.'

Miriam. 'But, Asnah, do you not yourself often use expressions which must leave one in doubt, whether you believe in a future state?'

Asnah. 'On this point my belief is this: that revelation has said nothing to us about it. I admit that the old fathers did some of them believe in it; but when I look, in the word of God, at the promises of worldly prosperity there given to obedience; when I see so many positive commands which I can obey, I try to obey them, and leave the question of my state hereafter to Him who made me.'

Miriam. 'With this I should not quarrel, were it not that I think that I could never have any sure hold on the faith of a man who does not look forward to the same promises and threatenings which influence me. Supposing, that I thought it was my duty to profess myself a believer in the despised Jesus, what should prevent you, who do not believe in a judgment to come, from acting towards me with unkindness and malevolence?'

Asnah. 'And what should prevent me from doing so, if I esteemed you an outcast from the synagogue of God, even though I did believe in a future state? What would Darkon do in such a case?'

Miriam. 'Why, to be sure, I do not think that his belief in a life to come would make

him very tolerant; but how can I trust any one who is not bound by this strongest of ties? How can I feel confident in your promises?’

Asnah. ‘If I did not love you better than my life, better than every feeling of honor which men hold the dearest, I should even now discard you; but as you spoke, I saw you dared not look at me as you said it: your mouth is guilty, your heart consented not to it, it dared not so turn traitor to its mistress. Look at me, Miriam! Asnah may be weak, he is weak, or he would not be the slave of woman’s love; he may be thoughtless, or he would not have forgotten all that you have unkindly said and done to him: but he never was false, he never will be false! Look at me, Miriam! But why do I vindicate myself; would to God that some other person dared call me false in your presence, and I would be contented, ah! too happy, that Miriam should plead my cause and defend me. Would not your bright black eye dart fire at the wretch who traduced your Asnah? would not your keen, your well-directed tongue, send forth a shower of piercing words to vindicate my character? And why will you not speak in my favor to Nathan?’

Miriam. ‘My father knows my wishes as well as I do; but like his daughter — when indeed she allows her reason to maintain its due

authority, and gives not way to the passionate addresses of love: when she resigns not herself to her feelings for the moment, as alas! I have now done ——'

Asnah. 'Why say, — alas! you have now done? You have tormented me for months, and you were at last almost cruel, but the thought of another's injuring me overcame you; and when I supposed it possible that another should traduce me before you, and you not vindicate me, the truth overcame you, and you let your eye once speak the truth; and I am blessed in the confession, though thus wrung from you.'

'*Asnah,*' replied *Miriam*, 'I never tried to conceal my affection; I have often told it to my father, but he — has, and I have with him doubted of your faith; for how can any marriage be blessed, save when God blesses it? Have I less reason to doubt now?'

Asnah. 'You never had any good reason for doubting at all; but you cruelly chose to doubt, and I could only vindicate myself to your father by accusing my own; and this I never did, or would do; I do not believe all that you believe: I confess this; but still I believe the word which God has given us, at least that part which I am convinced that God has given us; and when I can see it shown that traditions come from God, then I will believe them.'

Miriam. 'But you say nothing of the Psalms and the Prophets.'

Asnah. 'My dear Miriam, we have not time now to enter on such topics. We love each other; let us join in persuading your father to consent to the marriage, and enjoy those blessings which the Almighty has bestowed upon us, trusting that he will guide us rightly.'

Miriam. 'But if we fail to go rightly, where to do so is in our own power, how can we expect to be guided rightly?'

Asnah. 'Pray, pray let us leave off these discussions. We really love each other. I, on my part, have long known this, long felt it to my cost; and but for the happy confession of your sparkling eyes, and those tears which forced their way from them, I might have gone on feeling the misery of loving, without knowing whether I were loved again, I cannot tell how long. Now go in and pay your visit to my mother and sisters: let nothing inform them what has passed; and when Sadoc returns, we will all go together to your father, and the matter may be settled at once.'

Thus saying, he forced Miriam forward into the chambers of the women.

CHAPTER V.

It was just before the hour of dinner when Gahar entered the house of Darkon, and, without waiting for the common civilities of salutation, exclaimed, 'Well, Darkon, you have heard the good news of my family. Asnah is to be forthwith married to Miriam.'

Darkon. 'Yes, I have heard that it was likely to be so; but I am glad to congratulate you yourself on so satisfactory a point. I know the love your family have borne her from a child, and she is every way worthy of Asnah. I wish I could hear of equal good news about your daughters. "Marry thy daughter," says the proverb, "and so shalt thou have performed a weighty matter."''

Gahar. 'All in good time; but, to be sure, one's children are a great trouble as well as comfort to one; and, in these times, what with the difficulty of maintaining decent appearances, and all the nonsense and fanaticism with which the country is overrun, one cannot but live in constant fear. There is the son of our neighbor, Micah, who is gone mad, and followed the Galilean.'

Darkon. 'Don't talk about it; it is too painful a subject. But I will do my best endea-

vors to put a stop to these acts of fanaticism. I have influence enough, I am sure, if we can but raise the people to destroy the leader of the sect; and then the whole will fall to pieces. Young people love notoriety, even with fishermen; but they will not like prisons, and scourges, and death. I know how to deal with them; suffer the son of Ezekiel to have his way with them for a few days, and we shall see what will become of these fanatics: these blind leaders of the blind.'

Gahar. 'Why, now I do believe that thou art as great a fanatic as those whom you would put down: surely it is no more contrary to the reason which we possess to turn fanatic, than it is to become a persecutor of fanatics. You believe in all the old woman stories of the traditions of the Elders, which have no more foundation than these miracles of Jesus. They are all hatched out of the same nest; credulity lays the eggs, and knavery sits on them.'

Darkon. 'I have borne with you so long, that I suppose I must bear with you still.'

Gahar. 'Bear with me? Of course you must, while you pretend to be governed by reason, or the word of God, and will yet argue gravely such nonsense as forms the basis of most of your theology. Two most erudite doctors discuss whether it be lawful on the sabbath-day

to mount an ass which you are taking to water, lest you should make it work! The learned wiseacres, assembled in the gate of some country town, shall quarrel and dispute as to the legality of walking over a new-sown field on a sabbath, lest the feet should convey some of the seed, and render the unconscious owner of these iniquitous heels guilty of sowing corn on such a blessed day! Answer for yourself: do not some men whom you esteem wise, argue on such questions as these? and while you are vigorously active in putting down other imposers, you would conceal it from the world that you are imposing on them? Answer to this charge, Master.'

Darkon. 'Why truly, if I wasted my time in confuting such arch-unbelievers as thou art, I might have work enough to do in Jerusalem. But, thanks be to God, the mass of the people still depend on us Pharisees, and the Sadducees scarce dare broach their real atheism to the multitude.'

Gahar. 'Atheism! the worst of us are only deists; and most of us are only deists in the scale of such bigots as you. We do not believe in a future state; for had it been the will of our Maker that it should be so, he would have revealed his will more clearly. We try to obey his law as far as we believe it to be his law;

but we do not believe in all the nonsense which the good doctors of your school teach us so plentifully. You yourself may be honest enough to believe all you teach: you yourself may try to practise what you enjoin, for aught I know; but you know, as well as I do, that the mass of the Pharisees are covetous, are unclean, are hypocrites; and when I and such as I, try to speak the truth, you call us hard names, and say that we are atheists. There are some among us who have no great faith in revelation at all; I own that: but I pray you, which is the nearest to an atheist really,—one who says that there is a God, and lives as if there were none; who teaches others to follow a law which he despises himself; or one who says that he believes in God, but does not believe in all the pretended revelations which the knavish interpreters of the will of God choose to bring forward as the commands of their Maker?'

Darkon. 'My good friend, I am convinced that you are only saying this to make me angry and lose my temper; and so I shall beg you to come to my old lady, who will pay you in your own coin.'

Gahar. 'Yes, she is a staunch scholar in your school, and has this manifest advantage over her husband: when I can bring forward a

sound argument against you, you have always sense enough to see and to feel it, and honesty enough to allow it: she, good soul, never saw an argument in her life; she believes all that her husband tells her, and uses his arguments without the possibility of being refuted, for she would not understand the refutation.'

Darkon. 'There is one of your arguments, however, which I cannot allow you to bring forward, without saying something about it: I mean that contempt which you express for the scrupulous examination of cases of conscience which we institute. The law of God is very particular in its commands on some points, and men of tender consciences are unwilling to incur even the idea of evil. Do you not yourself allow that wise and prudent men will try to solve the difficulties of such persons?'

Gahar. 'And I, on the other hand, will ask you fairly, whether this is practically the question at issue? Whether this is the real source of such examinations? Do not most of your doctors discuss questions of this sort, for the sake of discovering how near they may approach to sin without incurring the guilt of it? If you had a hundred cases of conscience, might not ninety-nine be answered by the people themselves, if they wished to obey even the traditional law on which they are founded?'

Darkon. 'Why, to be sure, I believe that many of them might be so; but you really ought not to attack the innocent prejudices of a set of men, whom you, Sadducee as you are, must allow to be most useful in guiding the people.'

'I allow no such thing,' replied *Gahar*: 'I believe that the best of you suffer your own prejudices to deceive you; that the majority of your party are run away with much more by interest than by anything else, and that many are mere cheats and deceivers.'

Darkon, 'Well, we are not likely either to persuade the other; so come to my wife's apartments. She will be glad to see you, reprobate as you are.'

The whole of this conversation had been painful to *Darkon*, and injurious to both parties.

Gahar had given loose to a vein of raillery, in which he had made no distinctions between the opinions of his friend and the absurdities of the Pharisees: he had violated every better feeling, in allowing his wit to torment his companion; and, without knowing anything of the miracles of Jesus, had attacked them with the rude weapon of indiscriminate ridicule, as if built on no better foundation than the traditions of the Elders. During the whole time, *Darkon* had suffered much, and paid the price which is

always due from prejudice to truth: he had cast the same defence around the errors of his sect, and the great truths which are derived from revelation; and when he was called on to contend against the unbeliever, and had discovered that some of his opinions were untenable, he had no resource but to give up the cause of revelation, together with that of traditions which he was forced to relinquish.

When they arrived at the women's apartments, Rhoda received Gahar with the utmost kindness, but quickly attacked him for coming and trying to unsettle the mind of her husband. 'When he is alone,' said she, 'he always sees the truth most readily and clearly; but no sooner do you come to argue with him, than all his decision seems shaken; not shaken by your arguments, for you never bring anything but objections, and merely quiz what you ought to respect.'

'That is,' replied *Gahar*, 'he judges very well while he only hears one side of the question, and gets puzzled when both sides are laid before him: is that what you mean?'

Rhoda. 'No; I mean that you, who have not sense or honesty enough to search for the truth for yourself, endeavor to distract the quiet brains of those who do: you raise doubts without doubting yourself, and leave others to solve them.'

Gahar. 'Why, this is a very heavy charge, indeed.'

Rhoda. 'Heavy, but not more heavy than true. Take the case on which I doubt not that you and my good man were arguing; take the case of this Jesus of Nazareth. You, both of you, believe him to be an impostor, yet you would try to persuade Darkon not to punish those who believe in him. You sometimes argue as if he were a true prophet; and you always endeavor to make my husband doubtful, and less vehement in his hatred of him.'

Gahar. 'I imagine that we think very much the same about him. I deem that he is a deceiver, and a very clever one; but I see no reason why a set of knaves, who deceive the people equally, should be allowed to set the people against another impostor, because he happens to be more clever and successful than themselves.'

Rhoda. 'A set of knaves, indeed! What, you mean the whole Sanhedrim? Darkon, the good old Nathan, and all of them?'

'Nay' interrupted *Hatipha*, 'I shall not allow you to call either party knaves. How can this new Teacher be a knave, who gains nothing but ill-treatment by his supposed knavery? I myself cannot help thinking that both the parties are honest in their intentions, and

that you are incredulous about them, merely because you are a believer in nothing yourself.'

'Thoughts are free, fairest,' said *Gahar*, briskly: 'you must think of me what you please; but I ask you fairly to judge for yourself, whether it be not an earthly pre-eminence which many persons might covet, to have a set of followers, who are ready to swear by your name, and to look up to you as a God? Do you not think that Darkon had rather be the leading man in the Sanhedrim, than make his own private fortune three-times as much as it is by the most honest means in the world? Do you not think, that the having a party of admirers is an object which many persons might desire for its own sake? I see that I have at least silenced you.'

'I confess,' said *Hatipha*, 'I never thought of that object.'

Rhoda. 'But you have not silenced me? your scoffs and your witticisms will fall equally dead on me as your arguments. You will never prove, and you may as well not try to prove, that we ought to attend to the deceits of this Galilean.'

Gahar: 'Why, as to attending to him, I cannot but think that it is worth while to attend to any subject, at least so far as to see whether there be any truth in it or no. Do not you

yourself wish to search for the truth as far as you can?’

Rhoda. ‘Search for the truth? Why, what truth can there be in such a deceiver? I never wish to search for the truth against my conscience.’

Gahar. ‘Why, now, that is very candid; but is not your conscience guided by the truth? Supposing it to be the truth, you would at least grant that then you would like to be convinced of it.’

Rhoda. ‘I grant no such thing. I am so sure, that I do not wish to be convinced of any thing; and am certain that you will never convince me of any but one point, and that is, that you believe nothing. But do not let us quarrel. I know that I never shall be able to make you speak seriously on any topic, and will try to stop your mouth in another way. We have some excellent stewed lamb, dished up with lentils, such as I know you love better than any arguments about prophets, or questions on sacred subjects.’

‘There is a way,’ said *Gahar*, smiling, ‘to every man’s heart, if people did but know it; and I must confess this, that if Pharisees know most fully the proper rules about fasting, their wives are acquainted with the surest methods of mortifying their appetites in another manner.’

If your arguments were as good as your cookery, I should certainly be a convert before many days were over. Do look how displeased Hatipha seems! why, my child, you will never make sweetmeats as well as your mother, if you let your pretty face assume so sour an aspect. What troubles you, dear?'

Hatipha. 'I was thinking of something else than sweetmeats or stewed lamb, I assure you.'

Gahar. 'Ay, thinking of a certain gentleman? Why there is no difficulty about that point, — is there?'

'All things may as well not be spoken at all times,' said *Rhoda*; and *Gahar* began to solace his curiosity, by diving deeply into the dish of lamb, stewed in 'lentils, which was placed before him. *Darkon* and *Gahar* sat each on a mat placed on the ground, under the shade of a large tree which grew before the window; and the mess of *Gahar*, whether originally larger or smaller, was gradually becoming five times as small as his host's. 'My dear *Hatipha*,' said *Rhoda*, 'do bring our hungry friend some of those cakes which were baked yesterday. The Passover has not begun yet; but unleavened bread is always good to mix with stews, and he may sop them to his heart's content in the gravy.'

As *Hatipha* hastened to the room where the

provisions were kept, she passed through the first court of the house, and there encountered Asnah and Sadoc, who were just come to convey the news that Nathan had consented to the union between the former and Miriam. 'Well, Asnah,' said *Hatipha*, 'I have heard it all, and congratulate you most sincerely. God grant his blessings on the head of Miriam, and on all who love her!' 'Amen, amen!' replied both the young men. 'But how,' inquired Asnah, 'could you hear it all? I have told no one, and have not myself left Miriam till I came here, and Sadoc has hardly yet heard the whole; so how you could have heard it, I cannot guess. There is some fresh miracle; the world is so full of miracles now-a-days, that I shall believe in miracles myself.'

'No scoffing, Asnah,' said *Sadoc*. 'You cannot be contented with being blessed. Let not your spirits lead you into your father's ways.'

'I am wrong, I am wrong,' said he; 'but do pray tell me how you knew it?'

Hatipha. 'How long ago did your father know it?'

Asnah. 'Not above an hour or two; but he promised to say nothing about it for two days.'

'Ay, promised to do that which he never did do, and which he never could do, if he wished it,' replied *Hatipha*. 'He has been here this

hour, and told us all. He never loses time: he has had a long argument with my father, put my mother in a rage, and has, by this time, eaten half a lamb, and more lentils than I could swallow in a fortnight.'

Asnah. 'Well, pray do not damp my joy, by telling me of my father's faults. I know he has his weaknesses; but who has not?'

'But,' said *Sadoc*, 'you yourself are in danger of falling into the same evils; and I am sure that a good lecture from Hatipha will make you a better husband to Miriam. Do tell us what has passed.'

Hatipha. 'The tale, as to its great features, is short enough, and a tale told many a day in this house. I did not hear his argument with my father; but I have heard many before, and I fear that I shall many more. They are all the same.'

'I do not understand,' said *Sadoc*.

Hatipha. 'Why, he comes here and makes my father display some of his strong prejudices: he makes him show himself uncharitable or bigoted, or both; and then he gets him into his power, and proves that what he is prejudiced against is no worse than the errors and absurdities into which some of the foolish Pharisees run; and then my poor honest father, is often half-silenced, but not convinced; and he

is warm, or he gives up the argument: and when he has appeared to himself, or to any one else who happens to be there, to be in the wrong, and probably he is partly in the wrong, Gahar seems to have proved that all the opinions of the Pharisees are incorrect; and, assuming it as a basis for the next discourse, leaves my poor father half confounded, much irritated, and utterly unhappy.'

'Does this happen often?' said *Asnah*.

Hatipha. 'Often more than it ought. If your good-natured father knew how much real pain, real misery, he inflicts on Darkon, he would leave off his raillery.'

'But, surely,' said *Asnah*, he helps to cure him of his prejudices by so doing,'

'To cure them!' replied *Hatipha*; 'to increase them tenfold; and I do not wonder at it. All his arguments amount to no more than just to raise a difficulty: they never tend to satisfy one; they say just so much, and no more. Your reasons are insufficient to satisfy any enlightened person; and I am surprised that even you should believe them. From all I see of his arguing with my father and others, I am sure that the temper of mind with which the opponent reasons, is of full as much consequence as the force of his arguments, and Gahar always seems as if he only argued to en-

rage his adversary. But excuse me, Asnah, for saying thus much against your father, at a moment when I ought only to congratulate you. I have just been witnessing enough to harass one far more patient than I am; and I confess that I am thrown off my guard by his sarcastic expressions about religion, and particularly about my great Master, in whom I cannot but believe, even though I have never seen him. Again excuse me, Asnah, and I am sure I ought to hope that your father will be equally kind; for I have left him all this time expecting some Passover-cakes which he was to have eaten with his lentils; but I suppose that lamb and lentils have vanished long ere this.'

This was true enough; for as she spoke, Gahar and Darkon approached, and the former, as he passed quickly by them, exclaimed, 'I see why I got no cakes; but if you can learn to make as good savory-meat as your mother does, you will some time or other make an excellent wife. Come, Asnah, come with me, I have many things to say to you; come along, I know your friends will gladly dispense with your company.'

So saying, the father and son departed, and Darkon left Hatipha and Sadoc to themselves. As soon as they were gone, Sadoc began inquiring into the reason of Hatipha's apparent

displeasure, which was but too evident in her whole manner and appearance.

Hatipha. 'Why am I angry, say you, Sadoc? I am sure that if you had witnessed the scene in which I have been just engaged, you would be angry too. I cannot understand how our two fathers can maintain a friendship with such a man as Gahar. They are both firm believers in all that God has made known to man, and I doubt whether he believes anything. And with regard to our friend Asnah, I often feel surprised that Miriam can tolerate his apparent indifference to all those points which are most dear to her. I often question how much he believes any thing himself.'

Sadoc. 'You are severe upon him. He is a Sadducee from conviction, and I sometimes wonder that the superstition and prejudices of the Pharisees do not drive all reasonable people away from them. Your good father is not much more moderate than Gahar on the other side of the question. Gahar is for believing nothing, for caring for nothing, and enjoying the passing hour like the brute beasts which perish. But then, too, he fancies that when he dies he shall perish equally with them. Your father believes in a God of mercy, and he is intolerant; he believes in a God of justice and purity, and he will be contented with impurity

and injustice in his companions, provided their sentiments coincide with his own on religious politics; he possesses many virtues, but they are all tainted by his party feelings. Men are to him good men, not as they obey God, but as they adhere to the dogmas of the Pharisees. Do you not see this, Hatipha?'

'Alas!' said she, 'I see it too much; but excuse me, if I do not speak of it. Yet how, after all, has Asnah persuaded your father to consent to the union with Miriam? I always thought that he objected strongly to it.'

'And so he does,' said *Sadoc*; 'but when Miriam had consented, I well knew that arguments, and reasoning, and wishes, and prejudices, would give way. We met together at Gahar's house, where Asnah had, in an hour of openness of heart, persuaded Miriam to create no further delay. On our return home he accompanied us; and when he and I had seen my father, and the old man learnt that Miriam had consented, he only asked me whether it were really so, and then begged God's blessing on their heads, after which I left them.'

'Well, I am surprised at this,' exclaimed *Hatipha*.

Sadoc. 'You do not know my father. He does not like Asnah much; but he has always

viewed religious questions without the warmth in which Darkon engages in them; and he knows that sincerity is a more lasting commodity than unbending orthodoxy. He knows that the son of Gahar is by no means like his father, and that the evils which are but too evidently engrafted in him, depend more on wrong teaching than on wrong natural feelings.'

Hatipha. 'It is right in a brother to say so; but Miriam must have given up many of her notions before she granted him leave to propose the matter to Nathan, or I am much mistaken.'

'I suppose,' said *Sadoc*, 'that there is some truth in what you say; but may not my sister find any excuse in your own mind for her weakness, if it be a weakness?'

Hatipha. 'Alas, Sadoc, it ought to be God first, and man afterwards; and if the Almighty look graciously on me, it must be so.'

Sadoc. 'Now pray do tell me what you would have had her do in this case?'

Hatipha. 'The path is plain. She need not have concealed her affection for Asnah; but she might have fairly told him, that till he had learnt to love God, no woman could wisely trust him that he would love her. She might have put his love upon the test of his reforming himself, and avoiding those vices which are but too evident in that house.'

Sadoc. 'My dear Hatipha, are all women to be angels?'

Hatipha. 'Men are wont to call them so, when they address them, and speak of them.'

Sadoc. 'Yes; but not actually angels. A wife should have some faults, that a husband may forgive her. But, laying aside such nonsense, what would you have said?'

Hatipha. 'I should have told him that I loved him as far as I dared love him; but that there was a greater love, the love of God, which prevented me from loving him as I wished; but that, if he ever became such as the servant of God ought to be, then I would gladly receive his addresses.'

Sadoc. 'Well, you are one woman in a thousand; and perhaps, it is very lucky for us men, that the rest are not like thee altogether; and now you are in a preaching mood, pray what must I do?'

Hatipha. 'Why, pray God that I may be better, far better than I am, and you worthy of me; and that whatever is, may be for the best.'

CHAPTER VI.

As the time approached at which the marriage of Asnah and Miriam was to take place, the exertions of both families were put in requisition, in order that every thing might be duly prepared ; and since there was no mother to arrange what was necessary for Miriam, the task was committed to the hands of Sarah. The old woman was one day actively engaged in arranging clothes and polishing jewels, when Sadoc suddenly came into the room where she was at work ; but much as she was delighted at his coming, she began her address to him in the following uncourteous strain : — ‘ Well, Master Sadoc, so you, I suppose, are come in to add to my trouble, as if I had not enough, and more than enough to puzzle the brains of one old woman, without the help of a young scapegrace, who always took a pleasure in giving his old nurse as much annoyance as he could. I wish you could have kept on the other side of the house till all this business is over.’

Sadoc. ‘ Well, if you wish it, Sarah, I am sure that I will go back again. But, — ’

Sarah. ‘ But what ? Why you do not surely mean to take me in earnest, and go back again, when I have all these things to show

you? But I will be too clever for you : I won't show you one of them.'

Sadoc. 'Now, pray do. I want your advice for once in my life, and having received it ten thousand times, and taken it once,——'

Sarah. 'Once? When did you ever take my advice? I am sure that if I could have had the guiding of you, you would long ago have been married to some angel of a woman, instead of being here at your age without a wife. But do tell me, when did you ever take my advice?'

Sadoc. 'Why, once you told me never to mind what an old woman said, and I have always attended to that.'

Sarah. 'Ay, I thought that there was some impertinence to your old nurse; for I never knew you do what she told you since you knew what it was to have a will of your own. But what it is you want now? for, notwithstanding your past ingratitude, I shall be glad to advise you for your good.'

Sadoc. 'I want to make a present to Miriam before her marriage, and I do not know what to give her.'

Sarah. 'This is, indeed, a serious matter; for she has received so many presents from all her friends, that I hardly know what you can give her. First of all, she had from your poor

mother, who never lived to wear out half her wedding-clothes, above seven full changes of raiment, one for every day of the bride's week; and if you could but see what Gahar has provided, what your father has given her, and what her friends have sent, it would surprise you.'

'And of what use can all this be to her?' said *Sadoc*.

Sarah. 'Use? You would not have your sister married like the daughter of a poor Arabian shepherd!' Is it of no use for a young creature, beautiful as she is, and when she is admired by every one; is it of no use that she should be decently dressed? But look here. Of all her dresses, this beautiful blue tunic, with short sleeves, and embroidered with silver, suits her the best, for it shows her white arms so charmingly; and the silver bracelets and armlets, which are made for it, look quite ashamed of themselves when they stand on her white flesh. And look here; she has two upper garments which do equally well for it. One is of the full size, you see, and will cover her all over: is it not a fine dark blue? and what a nice silver clasp! The other is of the same color as the tunic, and not quite so large, but both suit it to a nicety. There is a head-dress to correspond, and ear-rings and necklaces. I

dare say that you would think she looked better in this dress of green and gold; and so she will, perhaps, in five years' time; or, perhaps, in this one of scarlet and purple. But what use is it to show you all this? You do not seem to care about it.'

Sadoc. 'My dear, good woman, I thought that when I had seen all she possessed, I should be able to find out all she wanted; but so far from this being the case, the more I look, the more I am bewildered. Now, do tell me, if you were in my place, what would you give her?'

Sarah. 'Why it should be something handsome, for your own sake; and I think that, unless her maid-servants are more careful than most young servants are now-a-days, one half of her clothes will be spoiled by the moths before she will use them. Therefore, I would not advise clothes.'

Sadoc. 'What would you advise then? Would a necklace of pearls suit her?'

Sarah. 'A necklace of pearls would suit her very well, but she has two already. One was her mother's, and the other was given her by the wife of Darkon.'

Sadoc. 'Now, that is kind of the old lady. Would that her kindness was extended to every member of the family!'

Sarah. ‘ And so it would be, if it were not for your foolish going and arguing with the old man about the new Prophet. I wish all the prophets in the world were safe out of it, and sent to heaven. There has been little peace in many a family since this Jesus began his preaching.’

Sadoc. ‘ A truce to this. I came to talk of tunics and necklaces. Now, then, what would you have me give? You say, she wants no clothes: is there any ornament which she would like?’

Sarah. ‘ Let me think! Considering her father’s situation in the world, she has a very small set of philacteries. You know the law says, “Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.”—(Deut. vi. 8.) Now, of the usual sentences, she has only two out of the four. She has, “Sanctify unto me all the first-born.”—(Exod. xiii. 2–10.) But she has not, “And it shall be when the Lord.”—(Exod. xiii. 11–16.) She has, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.”—(Deut. vi. 4–9.) But she wants, “And it shall come to pass.”—(Deut. xi. 13–21.) Now, I think that if you had these two, which she is without, beautifully written out and set, one in a band of blue, ornamented with pearls, and the other in green,

with rubies, to suit her prettiest dresses, you would not only make her a very nice present, but one which was well suited to the pious character of your father's family.'

Sadoc. 'My good old woman, do you think that God meant his servants to wear his word on their bodies? Are not these merely figurative expressions, to show how closely his commands were to be joined to our every-day life and proceedings? and has not mere superstition applied it to these false purposes?'

Sarah. 'False purposes, indeed! The world is growing so much wiser than their grandfathers, that children are not convinced that a thing is right, when they are told that those who went before them did so.'

Sadoc. 'Well, well, I did not come to argue.'

Sarah. 'But you came to be advised; and when I advise you, you find yourself so much wiser than I am, that you may advise yourself. I am sure that I do not wonder that you never satisfy that godly old Pharisee, Darkon; he, good man, has another notion of the wisdom of those who went before us. But do n't go away angry, Master Sadoc.'

Sadoc. 'I am not angry, but I have made up my mind what to give her.'

Sarah. 'And pray what may that be?'

Sadoc. 'A new written copy of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.'

Sarah. 'My good young gentleman, what a present for a bride ! Why you might almost as well give her a sword, or bow and arrows, or a horse. What will Gahar say to such a marriage present?'

Sadac. 'In truth, I care not much what he says. You tell me that my sister wants no clothes; that she has more ornaments than she knows how to use; and why need I give her more? The words of life may prove a blessing to her. She may have comfort in them in solitude, and in the hour of wo, and I fear that she may sometimes find Gahar's thoughtlessness a greater trouble to her than she expects. But all is now settled, and God prosper it!'

Sarah. 'There is so much truth in what you say, that I know not how to answer it. But you may as well send home your present after the marriage is over; I am sure it would cause a great laugh among the bride's maids, if they were to find it as one of her marriage-presents; you know that the day after to-morrow the marriage is to take place?'

Sadoc. 'This is another point which I wish to be informed about. What is done at our house on the first day?'

Sarah. 'On the first day, you and your fa-

ther receive your friends and feast them; and Miriam's female friends come and condole with her on her departure from home. I suppose that there will not be much real condolence for so happy a marriage as this; but we always keep up a sort of form. After supper, you and all the men set off and find the bridegroom, who is to hide himself, and to give you all the trouble he can in discovering him; but this is no very difficult task in general; and you will bring him back to your house, when you have dressed him in his most sumptuous attire; for when you find him he will have his worst clothes on. Then, at midnight, the bridegroom and all his friends come to the women's apartments, where we shall have been feasting, and take the bride by force: and remember that they do you most honor who make the most noise in this storming of our chambers: but when we surrender, then the bride is taken home with music and dancing, and the company from Gahar's house come out and meet us with lamps and torches, and all go in together to the marriage-feast — the men to theirs, the women to a separate one; and then the bride's friends, the virgins that bear her company, place her in the marriage-bed, and all the men leave the house with music and dancing; and during each of the days of the week there is a

feast at the house of the bridegroom, and the men are entertained by him, while the women are employed in looking over the presents; and during these days, I shall come in, I assure you, for my share, as the nurse of the bride; and I need to have something to keep up my spirits, for it is a sad thing to lose one's only child. You, with all your love for old Sarah, will never come over and listen to my tales, as Miriam did.'

Sadoc. 'Never trouble yourself about that; Miriam may come over sometimes; it is not very far: but what is to be done on the seventh day?'

Sarah. 'Nothing particular. Very much the same as the other days. But most of the presents are made on that day, and you may then offer her your musty old manuscript, if you please.'

Sadoc. 'Never vex yourself; I will not give you one. But does no one of the priests or Levites attend to bless the marriage?'

Sarah. 'No; your father will give his blessing; but that is all.'

Sadoc. 'And have I nothing to do.'

Sarah. 'No, nothing, but to be as agreeable as you can to every one, and to be pleased with everything.'

Sadoc. 'Well, that is an easy lesson, at least.'

CHAPTER VII.

SOME time had now elapsed without much intercourse between Sadoc and the house of Darkon. The marriage of his sister had naturally occupied much of the attention of the former, and the consciousness of his own change of sentiments with regard to Jesus of Nazareth had created a misgiving in his mind, as to the honesty of not openly avowing his decided belief. He was happy in the knowledge that Hatipha had adopted his opinions on this important point; but when he considered that this fact had not been disclosed to her parents, his mind was filled with anxiety and care. It was during this period that the Passover had taken place, and Jesus had suffered, under the unjust accusation of the Jews, that sentence which the weakness of Pilate had passed upon him. But the agents in this stupendous act little thought of the blessed nature of what they had blindly accomplished, or looked up to that mercy, which through it was held out even to themselves. Darkon rejoiced in having excited the multitude, and persuaded Pilate; but he little imagined that the faith in Jesus had gained a sure place in the heart of his only child; when, therefore, Sadoc entered his house some days after the crucifixion, he exclaimed, in triumph,

— ‘ Well, Sadoc, what is now become of your Messiah? Is this he who was to deliver Israel? I told you that none of the doctors had believed on him; but you, as might be expected in one so young, and led away by enthusiasm, would hardly listen to the words of an elder, who was guided by reason and experience.’

Sadoc. ‘ Nay, speak not so harshly of me, for I have sincerely sought the truth. Appearances do indeed seem against me; but experience might teach you, — if I might urge such an argument, — experience might teach you, that God’s ways are not our ways, and that even yet, they who trust in him shall not be deceived.’

Darkon. ‘ Well, my good youth, I thought that this proof must have silenced you; but it seems that I was mistaken. I know that your mind is honest, and I would fain inquire of you what it is on which you now rely; how can you imagine that God would suffer the Deliverer who was to come into the world to undergo an ignominious death?’

Sadoc. ‘ Why, in truth, I did not expect it; I am disappointed: and even yet, I do not feel sure that I had not mistaken the prophecies; at least, that I had not applied some of them wrongly; but when I find this same Teacher, over whom the grave has no power; when I find him again alive, and appearing to his faithful followers, how can I longer doubt?’

Darkon. 'Here is another instance of the manner in which these deceivers continue to delude you; the Roman soldiers have come and told a plain tale, that while they slept, the disciples came and stole the body; if I have no other evidence, I must believe them. Have you seen Jesus yourself?'

Sadoc. 'No, but I have been told of his resurrection; and if these soldiers were sleeping, how could they know who stole him? The tale is plain enough, and plainly false.'

Darkon. 'However, as I have my version, and you yours, we cannot reason on facts which we do not both allow; dismiss this, and tell me on what your faith rests.'

Sadoc. 'For the sake of argument, I will dismiss it, because my confidence rests on what my eyes have seen. You never heard this Jesus teach; you never heard him speak, so as man never spake; you never saw him do such miracles as I have seen him perform. The blind were brought unto him, and he told them to see, and they did see; they departed with the full use of their eyes: could I mistake this?'

Darkon. 'They might have acquired that which they had never lost; might you not mistake the fact of their being blind before?'

Sadoc. 'I might mistake in one, in two, in three instances; but I could not mistake in all the cases which I have seen.'

Darkon. 'And a man may possess such a power of doing wonders, not from God, but from the father of lies.' "

Sadoc. 'He might, if God would allow it; but can the servant of God believe that the Almighty would allow those who trust in him in sincerity to be thus deceived?'

Darkon. 'God does not allow those who serve him with an humble and teachable spirit to be so deceived; but when the young, the thoughtless, the ignorant, follow their own wisdom, and not the wisdom of age, may not our Heavenly Father punish such persons by suffering them to deceive themselves, and by giving our great Enemy power to deceive them? You mis-state the question: God does not suffer his obedient servants, the Scribes and Pharisees, to be deceived; but he permits those who proudly follow their own opinions to fall into error.'

Sadoc. 'Say not that we follow our own opinions merely: did not these very Scribes and Pharisees examine most strictly into a case, within these few days? Did they not bring before them a man who was born blind, and who had recovered his sight by the touch of this very Jesus? Did you not summon before you the parents of the man; and after having investigated the matter most fully, did

you not come to the conclusion, that a miracle had been done? Did you, or any one, venture to deny it?’

Darkon. ‘Does it follow that the thing must be true, because a blind man, who was born in sin, and who bore the positive marks of God’s displeasure on him; because this man was cured, — if indeed he were cured, — because he and his parents were deceived, does it follow, because we could not show that they were deceived? does it follow, that therefore he who performed this cure was the Messiah? You proceed far too hastily in your argument. I allow that we could not prove the thing to be false, for there appeared to be a conspiracy among the bystanders. They were all fascinated by their own enthusiasm; — but are you, who were not present, and such as you, more able to judge of these matters, than those who stand before you, far before you in piety and learning?’

Sadoc. ‘Piety is to be judged of by God: let him say, for he alone can say, whether he approve most of the outward ceremonies of the law, or of the inward purity of the soul; whether he will regard with the greater satisfaction, the washing of the hands or of a cup, or the sanctifying of the heart; and as learning is of no use unless it lead to wisdom, we may fairly

question, whether to reject him whom God hath sent, because none of the Scribes and Pharisees have believed on him, be not to shut one's own eyes against the testimony of heaven, and to be contented with the evidence of men; and, more than this, of prejudiced and partial men? They who have built up a system of ceremonial observances, to which they attach the name of holiness; they who are avaricious, unclean, ostentatious, and hypocrites, under the sanction of superior holiness, may well dread the prevalence of such doctrines as Jesus of Nazareth teaches; and am I, because you and others choose to disbelieve in miracles which you have not seen, and which you will not go and see, — and, shall I speak the truth? which you dare not go and see, — shall I reject the testimony of my own senses? When I saw our friend Lazarus, whom his sisters had buried, whom his friends were lamenting, and who was already beginning to be corrupted in the grave, — when I saw him, at the bidding of this despised Messenger of God, leave the grave and become alive again, can I doubt a testimony which has every proof of God's hand clearly stamped upon it? — Shall I disbelieve my own eyes, merely because others are determined to reject every proof?'

All this was spoken with increasing vehemence on both sides; and during the last speech,

the countenance of the old Pharisee became more and more irritated, and when these last words were uttered, he drew himself up and left the room, saying, —

‘ I see, Sadoc, that it is to no purpose to reason with you. Your ignorance and your obstinacy will only irritate me, and make me lose that command over myself which is due to the station which I hold in the world. Am I, who have long been regarded as the most regular and obedient follower of the school of Hillel; am I to have my opinions questioned, and my well-formed decisions controverted by a youth who is still the slave of his own passions, the dupe of enthusiastic teachers, and the blind follower of the blind? But I forbear: I cannot speak with coolness, and I leave you. The sun now shows me that our intercourse has too long delayed me; and that the Sanhedrim are even now expecting my presence, little fancying that I have been so wasting my time as to listen to the dreams of a follower of the Galilean.’

No sooner had Darkon quitted the room, then Hatipha, the tears rising in her eyes, and with a countenance in which grief and affection were struggling for the mastery, exclaimed, —

‘ Dearest Sadoc, what have you done ? How

have you offended him whom you always loved? How have you violated that duty which you owed my father?’

Sadoc. ‘Could I listen to his arguments, which are blasphemously adverse to our holy Teacher? Could I allow him to revile the cause for which I am willing to resign not only every earthly good, but my life itself?’

Hatipha. ‘There is one thing, dearest, which it is more difficult to give up even than life itself. I mean our own passions. You have adopted sentiments concerning Jesus, which I believe to be correct; which you feel certain to be true. But were you convinced at once? Were you persuaded in a moment, that Jesus was a Teacher sent from God? Was it not the patience, was it not the forbearance which Jesus exhibited, that touched your heart? Have you not again and again described to me the patient manner in which your new Master bore with all the perverse misconceptions of his other followers, and with your own? But no sooner are your own opinions contradicted by one older and wiser in all respects than you are, than you suffer your passions to get the better of your respect for my father, and thus prevent him from even hearing your arguments.’

Sadoc. ‘But are not my arguments the truth? Do I not speak in a cause which ought to be

dear to me, and for which I ought to be ready to die; and am I patiently to listen to the perverted arguings of an unbeliever?’

Hatipha. ‘Ah, why suffer yourself to be still governed by warmth instead of reason? why answer me in a tone which it would better become you to use towards an enemy than towards me, or rather a tone which it becomes you to use towards no one. Think, I pray, you what is the real object which you have at heart? Is it not to convince my father, as you have already persuaded me? You wish to influence his mind, not to silence his reasonings; and you argue in a manner which will produce neither the one effect nor the other. Consider the difficulties which arose in your own mind, when you first heard of Jesus. Consider how you despised Talbai, when he first told you that he regarded Jesus as the Christ; and then consider how much more strong those prejudices are which exist in the mind of the aged, the learned, and the admired Darkon. I dreaded your interview with him, even while I could not but wish for it. But alas, your imprudence has filled me with alarms, and persuaded me that now there is but little hope that any one will ever convince him.’

Sadoc. ‘But I only spoke the truth; I only showed the fallacy of his reasonings.’

Hatipha. 'Alas, you did more, much more. You seemed to despise the reasoner. Your words attacked his dearest prejudices. You know that hardly any body of evidence against the Messiahship of Jesus could now persuade you; that you would not hearken to any reasoning which was contrary to your present opinions. But pertinacity in adhering to one's own preconceived ideas does not belong to the maintainers of truth alone; many are equally obstinate in defending falsehood, and perhaps they make up in warmth for their want of reason. If you have the truth on your side, why not allow the truth quietly to confound the errors of others? Was it not this which particularly struck you in listening to Jesus?'

Sadoc. 'I fear, dearest, that you are right. Alas, the most sincere of us are apt to be but weak in our conduct; but you must allow that conviction built on evidence of an Almighty power, which my own eyes have seen, is very different from the mere traditional prejudices of your father.'

Hatipha. 'There is this great difference, that the maintainer of truth ought always to be most temperate. I ask you, can you hope to persuade my father, except by patiently reasoning against his prejudices? And have you reasoned so? Would your Master have reasoned as you have done?'

Sadoc. 'Alas, alas, your reproof is too just, and I will endeavor to undo the evil when I next meet your father. I will confess my foolish haste, and endeavor to show my sincerity, by patiently hearing and refuting his arguments.'

Hatipha. 'Cease your vain projects. You know nothing of human nature: you know nothing of my father, if you imagine that you can ever undo the impression once made. God may raise up some other instrument to turn his heart. God may enable me to soothe his chafed spirit. God may make me that blessed instrument; but believe me, his heart will never again hearken to your arguments; his ear will scarcely ever bear the sound of your tongue. Ah, how little do the imprudent, the hasty, consider the evils which they incautiously produce! Who can say, Sadoc, that you might not have been allowed, by a merciful Providence, to convert the most influential man in the council? To have convinced my dearest father? But one false step of yours has dashed this blessing from your grasp, and deprived me of that which would have proved my greatest earthly joy. But deceive not yourself, all these bright prospects are passed; you are forever separated from my father. I dare not say more: but I know him, and I know that noth-

ing but an entire surrender of myself to him and his wishes can ever enable me to gain any influence over him; and I see clearly that he will demand it of me, and God give me grace to do my duty. I cannot, I dare not, continue this conversation. My fears are too well founded to admit of any doubt. I know it must be so; and difficult and painful as the path of duty must be, God give me grace to follow it. Farewell, I must leave you. Nay, endeavor not to withhold me; pray suffer me, whom you have so often urged to fear God rather than man, to follow your advice, and to obey God while I commit violence on my feelings—while I discard my own wishes, and those of him who is dearer to me than myself.’

‘Merciful Heaven, what have I done!’ exclaimed *Sadoc*, as *Hatipha* left the room; ‘to part with her thus, and to part with her, perhaps forever. But why should I hesitate in my decision? Why should I doubt the propriety of forming a resolution equally strong? I defended the cause of truth; I am doomed, possibly, to suffer for it, in the tenderest of points: but blessed are they who suffer for the truth’s sake. It was the stupid obstinacy of the old man who urged me on to warmth? And was there not full ground for warmth? If his prejudices carry him so far as his daughter seems to anticipate, I must endure the evil as

one of those sufferings which the sincere are doomed to undergo in the cause of truth — and if I so suffer, I shall be blessed in my sufferings. Fare thee well, Hatipha! Happy and blessed have been the hours which we have spent together since I first knew thee,' thought he within himself, as he left the dwelling of the old Pharisee; 'happy have been the hours since I first knew thee; but happier, far happier, since I first loved thee and dreamed that my love was not rejected. But who shall tell of the blessedness which we have enjoyed since our affection was brightened by the mutual love which we bore to each other, as the converts to a common faith, the followers of the same despised Master, and heirs of everlasting bliss, through the religion of Jesus? But, if I must give up all this for the sake of my Master, I voluntarily make the surrender. All I would gladly know is, that I am giving it up for the sake of my Master: — would that I could feel sure that my sufferings had not originated in myself. May not my own fault, this same false eagerness, have estranged from me the father of Hatipha, and deprived me of the hopes of serving my Master, by influencing the mind of the old Pharisee, and perhaps, at length, converting him? To what blessings did I look forward, when I approached this house. All

these fair prospects have fled; but have I not deprived myself of them by my own intemperate zeal; by my own want of such patience as I admired in Jesus? Alas! it is easy to bear the greatest misfortunes with which God afflicts us; but it is not easy to bear the thought, that our own faults have occasioned the suffering. Ah! how shall I remedy my folly?' Thus said he, as he hastened homeward, and gave up his mind to meditation and to prayer.

Meanwhile, a far different scene was passing in the house of Darkon. That offended Pharisee, when he returned from the Sanhedrim, quickly summoned Hatipha to his presence, and questioned her strictly as to her faith in Jesus of Nazareth. She attempted not to conceal the impression which had been made on her mind by the discourses of her lover; and her father, in the bitterness of his soul, cursed the day on which Sadoc had entered his house.

'Ah! curse him not,' cried *Hatipha*, 'he has followed what he believed to be the truth, and he has only taught me to do so.'

'The truth?' exclaimed *Darkon*; 'is it truth to teach a child to disobey her parents?'

Hatipha. 'I never have, and by God's grace, never will disobey any command of a parent, unless it be contrary to the law of God.'

Darkon. 'Then promise me, that thou wilt

never see him more: no law of God prevents this.'

'That is,' replied *Hatipha*, 'impossible.'

Darkon. 'I thought what your obedience would end in.'

Hatipha. 'Nay, father, you mistake. I may not be able to prevent seeing him. I promise you, that I will never see him again, as my lover, without your leave.'

Darkon. 'Nay, that is all I meant; and will you promise this?'

Hatipha. 'I do promise it.'

Darkon. 'Then the blessing of God is still upon me. Oh, *Hatipha*! how much pain, how much joy, hast thou caused to thy aged father. I little thought that any child of mine would ever see me weep; but thou hast overcome me. The blessing of God be upon thee. Thou has quite unmanned me:' said he, as he left the room convulsed with sobs and tears.

No sooner was he gone, than *Hatipha* composed her mind, as well as she could, by prayer and meditation, and afterwards addressed the following letter to *Sadoc*.

CHAPTER VII.

‘HATIPHA to SADOE: greeting. — Believe me, when I tell you that our last meeting was so painful, that I pray God we may never meet again. I doubt not that you will fully judge of the misery which I have endured before I could say thus much. But all is now passed; for when the mind is once decided under a sense of duty, the expression of sentiments, however grievous, is comparatively an easy task. Sure am I that the friendly intercourse in which we have indulged from our childhood, and which you taught me to hope might have been continued through a life of mutual affection, must cease, since every renewal of it would only tend to add a pang to sorrow, which even now seems to me greater than I can bear.

‘After what has passed, it is impossible that my father should ever consent to our union. He will never taunt you with it; but he can never forgive you for having convinced me, that the Prophet of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Christ. I believe, and therefore, I hope that we may meet hereafter; but my father’s curse would accompany our meeting here; and God deliver me from a father’s curse, and grant me a blessing from him, even though it proceed from an unbelieving heart. The God who bids

me honor my father and mother makes no distinctions with reference to their obedience or faith. Would to God that they believed. But whether they believe or no, I believe; and, by the grace of God, I will obey them, by doing them honor in that point which is dearest to their hearts. Pray, never try to persuade me otherwise. You have always spoken of duty as the first of objects: now let me see that you esteem it so. The pain of such a decision is far less when it is over than you would imagine. I thought that I should have died under it; but God has given me strength to obey him, and to cast off that which was dearest to my heart of flesh. The same power will aid you to do the same. You must acquiesce: you have no alternative; but pray God that we may bear our mutual separation as the direction of his wise providence. To you a glorious field of labor is opened. Go forth and teach to others the same religion which has enabled me to bear my cross with patience. Go, follow thy Divine Master, and make others happy, by instructing them how to deny themselves, and to suffer with Jesus. Go, deny thyself, and learn the happiness of suffering in thine own person, whilst thou art employed in making others happy.

‘Excuse the only advice which I shall ever

give thee. Excuse a word, which, if it seem to blame thee, does it in the purest love. When thou art engaged in reasoning with the weak and ignorant, I know that you will use all forbearance; for to such you were always kind and gentle: but when thou reasonest with the learned and wilful, let thy lips be ever tinged with the honey of soft persuasion. You know what I mean: we have both suffered from it: God forgive thee this fault, and grant that our suffering may prove the cause of thy cure.

‘And now farewell. Farewell forever. In this world we shall never meet again. We cannot meet as we were used to do, and other meeting had better be avoided. Farewell.

‘I cannot ask thee to forget me; for I shall never wish to forget you: nay, rather would I keep up a daily remembrance of each other in our mutual prayers to God. I will daily entreat the Almighty, that he whom it pleased his providence to make the blessed instrument of opening my eyes to the truth, may be blessed himself, by conferring the same favor on many future servants of Jesus. I will pray our common Saviour, not that you may be blessed with outward and earthly prosperity, or possess the good things of this world; but that you may be blessed as he would have his servants blessed. That you may become poor in spirit,

meek, and merciful; that you may mourn, and hunger and thirst after righteousness; that you may be pure in heart, and prove a peace-maker; yea, and be persecuted for his name's sake. Can I wish a servant greater good than that he may be made like his master? And when, in the hour of thy faithful exertions in the cause of truth, thou hast time to think of one, whom thou didst first teach to know the way, the truth, and the life, — pray for her, that God may accept her for his own Son's sake.

‘I cannot hope to preach salvation to a benighted world; but the little world in which God has placed me, is still a dark corner; and if in his mercy he would make me the means of turning my parents into the way of peace, oh! think upon the joy it would confer. My path is straight before me. I must obey: I must soothe the declining years of those who gave me birth: I must endeavor to persuade them, but I must bear with them, — I must obey them. I know that our holy faith will cause divisions among families; but woe be to the followers of Jesus, if the divisions originate with them. My task is no easy one. Oh, pray for me, that I may be enabled to pursue it as the disciple of Jesus.

‘When I began this letter, I fancied that the last farewell would be full of pain; but while

we strive to do the will of God, while we pray for each other, and endeavor to fulfil our destined task, the time of meeting again cannot be far distant; and the same power which now bids us part in tears, will bid us meet again with joy, — a joy never more to be interrupted.'

CHAPTER IX.

SADOC had not yet received the letter of Hathi-pha; but that foreboding which a long acquaintance with the sentiments of Darkon had created in his mind, had thoroughly convinced him that there was no hope of final success in that earthly object which had long been dear to his affections. He hardly yet dared acknowledge this truth to his own mind, but his mind was fully alive to it. The bitterness of sorrow had corrected, while it excited his feelings. His first grief had arisen from the loss which he had sustained, but this was rapidly succeeded by a far more painful consciousness that this loss had greatly proceeded from his own impatience; and through the grace of God, instead of reproaching himself as the author of his own misfortunes, he had learnt to condemn his want

of meekness, which God had been pleased to punish by a worldly loss. He acknowledged the hand which chastised him, and had prayed, that the chastisement might cure him of his faults. It was in this frame of mind, in which agitation was strangely mixed with holy patience and distracting doubts, that he met his friend Talbai at the gate of the valley; and, having walked for some time within sight of Calvary, Sadoc addressed his companion in the following words:

Sadoc. 'How far is your mind made up as to the absolute completion of all that we have witnessed? Do no misgivings alarm you? Do no questions of doubt arise in the chambers of your soul, such as you hardly dare reveal to your old and tried friend? Jesus has risen from the grave; but has this solved all your difficulties?'

Talbai. 'Your question is in that indefinite form, that I hardly know how to answer it. There are difficulties still remaining in my mind, but they are such as arise from my own ignorance, and not from any mistrust in the wise artificer. When I behold one of those enormous galleys, in which the Romans sometimes approach our shores, I do not understand all the contrivances by which the rowers urge on this huge mass. I do not know exactly how each man contributes to give motion to the

whole, which by himself he would be totally unable to move; but I see the whole does move according to some known law, and I admire the human skill which could have given rise to so wonderful a work. I do not understand precisely how this great mass is directed, but I see the pilot standing at the helm, and surveying everything. I see the ship guided by some means or other most skilfully, and I have no alternative but to conclude that it is he who guides it. I have no misgivings as to my general conclusion, because I see the whole, as a whole, directed by some human skill; and though there are points which I do not comprehend, yet, my own ignorance on these points never leads me to doubt the dexterity which guides the whole.'

Sadoc. 'I see that your confidence is not so far different from my misgiving. When I look at the question as a whole, I own I have no doubts; but when some difficulties in the details come across me, then again, my general confidence gives way to the particular evidence before me; and I say within myself, how can these two things, which seem to be contradictory, — how can they both be true together?'

Talbai. 'The best method of answering such difficulties is by discussing one of them by itself first; for I suppose that the misgiving, of which

you speak, is not of that peculiar nature that one instance will differ much from another.'

Sadoc. 'I do not know what to select. But let us look at the prophecies. There are many of them which I do not understand at present; and can I conceive that God would give prophecies to guide me, and yet leave them so apparently uncertain, that one who wishes to comprehend them shall not be able to do so? There are, for instance, prophecies which speak of the universal reign of the Messiah. "His dominion shall be also from the one sea to the other, and from the flood unto the world's end." (Ps. lxxii. 8.) How can these be fulfilled in Jesus? The general expectation entertained among our people, that the Messiah shall cast out these accursed Romans, who vex, oppress, and defile us as a nation, is founded on this and such prophecies.'

Talbai. 'This is one instance among many more, in which I allow my faith to keep my reason quiet. I understand it no more than you do; but I must reject the whole or receive it with all the parts, some of which I do not comprehend. If you went to see one of the galleys of which we were speaking, and could not discover how a part of one of the oars contributed to help on the ship, should you, therefore, conclude that the ship was not rowed?

In this particular case, I know that I cannot exactly explain how Jesus is a king, nor do any of his more chosen disciples seem to have done so ; but when he was before Pilate, he said, " My kingdom is not of this world : if my kingdom were of this world, then would my disciples have fought for me." If, therefore, his kingdom be not of this world, why may not the psalm of David refer to some other dominion than that which is founded on worldly authority ? When it is said, in the same psalm, " His name shall endure forever," may not the name be a spiritual name ? for when I look back on the prophetic difficulties with which we were embarrassed a few weeks ago, and see how much plainer everything appears to us now, I cannot but hope that much greater difficulties will easily be solved. Take, for instance, the chapter in Isaiah on which we were conversing (liii). We were both of us then unable to explain many passages in it, as well as to see the general drift of the whole. We only understood generally, that this had been received as belonging to the Messiah. The only point on which we clearly saw that it seemed to belong to Jesus was in those words with which it begins, wherein the incredulity of the mass of the people is spoken of : ' Who hath believed our report ? ' We saw that Je-

sus had not been received ; but this was hardly a sufficient ground for interpreting it of him. But we did not comprehend how he had "borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ;" how he was "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." But since we have listened to the accounts which they gave us who had seen the mock trial, and the real condemnation of the Son of God, we have fully learnt how "he was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth ;" how "he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Now we can see all this, not because the prophecy is the clearer, but because further information has opened our eyes, and in those prophecies which I do not at present understand, and in which I perceive a difficulty, I exercise the same faith which has been confirmed by these examples, and look forward in the hope of understanding them hereafter. Or, if it should please God never to reveal the meaning of them to me, I look forward in the hope that enough will be revealed to strengthen my faith ; nothing doubting that, as I have no right to expect any more than this from God, he will make it effectual to my salvation.

' In the passages, therefore, which follow

those which I have been just quoting, when I find the words, "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong," though I do not know how this shall happen, yet I cannot but believe that it will happen ; and whatever I cannot understand of the earthly kingdom of the Messiah, about which I feel that I was before mistaken, I interpret in my own mind of his spiritual kingdom, to which I certainly did not look forward, till the events which have lately taken place among us prevented me from expecting an earthly one.'

Sadoc. 'Your reasoning has much force in it, and the very chapter which you have quoted contains an expression which has often puzzled me in former times; but which, when I look at it with my present knowledge, is as clear as the day. "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." Now I thought within myself, how can this be? How can the chosen of God make his grave with the wicked? and how can the grave of a malefactor be the grave of the rich? But we all see how it has been accomplished; and I may say the same of that psalm which describes his sufferings: "They pierced my hands and my feet: I may tell all my bones." ' (xxii. 17).

Talbai. 'And why, then, does not the same

sort of conviction attend you in those particulars concerning which you are still in the dark ? Why do you not take the whole as a whole, and so receive it ? If, in trying a criminal, the judge did not weigh difficulties one against another, how would he ever be able to form a correct opinion of the guilt or innocence of the prisoner ? He says within himself, " Here is this evidence against the criminal ; but still there are these difficulties which I cannot understand. On the other side, there is no evidence in his favor. What, then, am I to conclude ? I cannot help thinking that the man is guilty, although I have not full evidence of his guilt. I must, therefore, weigh the evidence on both sides, and then form my opinion as a whole." Try the question concerning Jesus by this rule, and see how it stands. There is the promise of some Deliverer granted to man immediately after the fall. There is the same promise continued to successive families, which is thereby so far narrowed, that it is declared that it should be accomplished in them, though by no means confined in its effects to them. In the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all the families of the earth are to be blessed. Now it was to the fulfilment of these promises, that all the fathers looked forward, and by degrees, as the scheme of revelation was more opened,

to man, the limits became more and more contracted as to the person and signs of the Deliverer, and, of course, turned the eyes of those who looked forward to the accomplishment of these prophecies to a more definite point. The time of the coming of the Messiah was pointed out, and this is the very time : the place of his birth was foretold, and Bethlehem was that place: the manner of his life was described. Our God, when he came to save us, was to open the eyes of the blind, and to make the deaf hear ; his low estate was painted in strong colors, as well as his rejection by the mass of the people and the rulers : his triumphant state was equally foretold ; and though I cannot yet see his triumphs, I expect them most fully. His kingdom is not of this world, and may not yet be spread over all nations ; but whether I see it or no, it will hereafter be spread. In all this there is no one prophecy on which any of us could build our faith. If any one of them were taken alone, there would be much difficulty in our believing that Jesus is the Christ ; but when I look at the whole, I cannot doubt. I see the miracles ; I hear his doctrine ; I examine the prophecies, and they all together furnish me with a mass of evidence which I cannot reject or question. If there exist still some small difficulty, I do not allow my

mind to entertain it for a moment. I will always examine ; for examination leads to truth. But if even fifty times as great difficulties were produced, would they be anything like a balance against the evidence which we possess ? Would the judge, if he were examining such a case, admit such difficulties to outweigh the direct evidence which was before him ?

Sadoc. ' But is there no moral evidence which weighs in your mind on the other side of the question ? I own that the depressed and suffering state of Jesus and his followers does seem to me almost an evidence against his having been sent from God, and such as is quite sufficient to disquiet the faith of a believer. When Darkon reasoned against me, and derided my Saviour because he had been crucified, because his followers had been dispersed and broken ; when he said, " Can you believe that, if he were the Son of God, God would suffer his enemies to triumph over him ? " I own that I was startled, and that I had not what to answer him. And though the force of all his taunts has vanished before the rising again of Jesus, yet I cannot say that my mind is not even now damped by this circumstance.'

Talbai. ' I do not wonder at this. God suffers doubts to remain, or there would be no exercise for our faith. If we were not obliged

to exercise our faith in God, how would this world be a place of trial? The object of all God's dealings with man is to create in us this faith, this trust, this confidence in God, which shall make the creature always look up with love to his Creator and Lord,—which shall make him say, "Thou knowest what is best for me: do with thy servant whatsoever is good in thine eyes." Was it not this which led Abraham to quit his own country, and to sojourn in a land of strangers? Was it not this which induced David to choose the pestilence rather than any other punishment, because he preferred falling into the hand of God, rather than into that of man? Now, whatever state of things shall create in our minds such a temper, such a faith, is not that state the most likely to lead us unto God?—and judge for yourself, whether the suffering condition of the followers of Jesus be not peculiarly suited to this state of things. If Jesus were triumphant in a worldly sense, might not many who are no followers of our Messiah, join his victorious standard? There is no such temptation now. I cannot, of course, pretend to say that this was the reason for which Jesus came in sufferings; but in this I see sufficient reason to make me feel, that God's ways are not our ways, that he is far wiser, far better,

than we are, and that his wisdom is not the less, because I cannot discover all the secret movements by which it is guided. And for myself, I suppose that there is a much higher object in the death of Jesus, though I do not see it developed to his followers. There are several expressions in the prophecies, which create in my mind the same idea as was conveyed by some words of Jesus himself. Daniel talks of "the Messiah being cut off, but not for himself;" Isaiah, "of our being healed by his stripes," and Jesus, in speaking to his disciples, said, "that he came to give his life a ransom for many." For myself, then, I presume that something far greater is intended by the death of Jesus, than the mere suffering which he underwent, and to which we ourselves are almost equally exposed; but I own, that such an idea is too indistinctly formed, even in my own mind, to allow of my attempting to explain it to you.'

Sadoc. 'But why may we not expect that God shall give full evidence to every creature? Why, for instance, is Darkon to blame, if such evidence has not been placed before him as he could clearly comprehend?'

Talbai. 'You mistake the question. Such evidence as you speak of has been placed before him. Might he not, any day, have gone out

into the streets of Jerusalem, and have witnessed those miracles which were wrought for this very purpose? Your difficulty supposes that he is not guilty of unbelief, because all the misgivings of his own mind have not been cleared away: but has he taken any steps to clear them away? Has not he, and have not thousands, as he has, voluntarily closed their eyes against the truth? God gives full evidence to every creature: that is, such evidence as they would act upon in the common concerns of life; but if they choose to reject this, the fault is surely their own, not God's. Take any of the common operations of life as an example. In husbandry, for instance, every man knows that, unless he prune his vines, they will not bear good fruit, and that the fruit will not ripen. Now, supposing that a dresser of a vineyard has been always used to prune and dress it in a particular manner, and that he is told by a friend, that if another method was adopted, the fruit would be better and larger, but that he is determined not to try. He will not go and look at his neighbor's vineyard, where the plan has been introduced: he only answers, "My old plan always did very well, and why should I change it?" "But," replies his friend, "if our new way is better than the old, our wine will become so much better, and more plentiful,

that you will not be able to sell your wine in the market." Now, if this dresser of the vineyard continues to follow his old plan, and finds, at last, that he cannot sell his wine, has he any right to blame his friend for not giving him better evidence? There was evidence enough, if he had chosen to come and seek for it: he might have opened his own eyes to the truth, but he preferred to close them. Has he any one to blame but himself? One half the people who will not believe in God's revelations are just as wise as this vine-dresser. They expect to be convinced without examining the evidence; or, they shut their eyes against the evidence, because their rooted prejudices are contrary to the truth. I will go on, and take your own case. You were bred up with every prejudice which would prevent you from receiving Jesus as the Messiah. I could hardly persuade you to look at all into the question. I cannot pretend to say what might afterwards have influenced your mind; but, certainly, when you began to look into it, the evidence was strong enough gradually to persuade you. You saw the miracles: you saw that no man, unless God were with him, could do such works. Therefore, you believed that God was with him: you heard his teaching: you perceived that his teaching was not as man's teaching;

he spake as one that had authority from God. There was no curious questions, no unmeaning quibbles and niceties, such as the Pharisees invent and discuss; there was the law of plain reason, such as a child might understand; there was no setting aside the law of God, but the law of God was exalted in his mouth. You saw the purity of it: you saw that the law of God, as explained by him, went to the heart of the servant of God. Moses forbade the act of murder. Jesus showed you that whoever hated his brother was a murderer, and your own heart told you that it was so; for every man's own conscience will say within him, "If the act of murder be prevented merely by the fear of punishment; if the man would murder his neighbor if he dared, and is only restrained by the fear of human penalties, how is he less guilty in the sight of the Most High? And when you were convinced of the holy nature of that which he taught, you then examined the prophecies, to see whether the signs of the Messiah were to be found in Jesus. At first there were many misgivings; some things which you did not comprehend: many of these have by degrees departed, and some may even now be revealed to you, through me, before we part. Has not God furnished you with evidence enough?"

Sadoc. 'Alas! I have every reason to be thankful; and even if my doubts and misgiv-

ings were greater, yet they are not to be compared with the evidence which is granted. I do not doubt: I only do not feel quite so certain as I could wish.'

Talbai. 'The certainty of faith can ordinarily only arise from a long continuance of belief: at least, from a long time spent in acting upon our belief. The mere fact of acting upon our belief, does of itself, and by God's mercy it does exceedingly, increase our faith. Every servant of Jesus, when he is called upon to suffer for his religion, will find his faith strengthened, and his eyes opened to behold the glorious things which shall hereafter be revealed.'

Sadoc. 'To a certain degree I have experienced this already: nothing has supported me so much, and tended to make me so confident, as the necessity under which I found myself, of giving up, in my own mind, all my hopes with regard to Hatipha, when I determined to profess myself to be a follower of Jesus: the mere circumstance of my acting upon my faith, has made my faith stronger, and tended to support me in so acting.'

'Yes my dear friend,' said *Talbai*, smiling; 'but do not mix up your own case so much with the evidences of the religion of Jesus. My own persuasion is, that you will lose Hatipha from your own improper warmth in arguing

with Darkon, full as much as through any religious surrender of your affections, which you were forced to make. Hatipha feels that she never can be connected with one whose presence must always be offensive to her father. Hatipha believes in Jesus as much as you do; but thinks that obedience to a father is as much a duty as following her own wishes. Therefore, if you please, we will leave this question undecided, and go back to those few texts, in which I think that I can clear up your mind.

‘The evidence by which we must prove that Jesus is the Christ, is the agreement of a great many prophecies with those things which Jesus has said and done. What can give a more accurate description of his last entry into Jerusalem, than the prophecy in Zechariah (ix. 9). “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” Now, till we had seen the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, how could we have interpreted this? Look, again, at the price which was paid for betraying Jesus (xi. 12, 13). “If ye think good, give me my price? and, if not, forbear; so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a

goodly price that I was prized at of them: and I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." Look at the second Psalm. Have we not seen the kings of the earth and the rulers taking counsel together against Jesus? Have we not seen the misery of Jesus clearly marked out in the words of the Psalmist (xxii)? Have they not laughed him to scorn, and shot out the lip at him? Have they not pierced his hands and his feet? Have they not parted his garments among them, and cast lots upon his vesture? When I look at this Psalm, I say "surely it was written concerning Jesus, and no other." So, too, when we saw Jesus risen from the grave in opposition to those stories which the Pharisees persuaded the Roman soldiers to relate concerning him, we understood the accomplishment of another Psalm (xvi. 10, 11): "Wherefore my heart was glad, and my glory rejoiced: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For why? Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell: neither shalt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

‘These prophecies strike my mind so strongly, that it seems to be absurd to question further. And yet, if I had to argue with any one who was not convinced by this evidence, I should readily go over the whole argument again; for I do see that it is one thing to have evidence

placed before us, and another thing to receive that evidence: and I cannot but allow that different people stand in need of a very different quantity and species of evidence; and, perhaps I, who feel so confident now, might lose my confidence, if I were called on to make some great sacrifice in the service of this Messiah. I feel such self-confidence at this moment, that I can truly say, I would rather suffer any death than deny my religion; and so said the holy Peter, and yet he fell. Oh, my dear friend, do let us pray to God to strengthen our hearts in the belief in Jesus, and that he will grant that we may mutually become the means of confirming one another.'

Sadoc. 'Why; do you expect that we shall have many difficulties to encounter now? Do you imagine that they will continue to persecute the followers of Jesus, when they have had their will against the Author of our holy religion, and found how little their malice could prevail?'

Talbai. 'And why should they not persecute us? If they have so dealt with the Master, will they forbear with regard to the servants? I know not exactly what difficulties we may have to encounter; but I can foresee nothing but difficulties on this side the grave, and I pray God to give us strength to bear

them. The religion which the Apostles must preach, is as much against flesh and blood as the teaching which has offended the Pharisees; and the same spite and malice of the world will always be exerted against it. Times may change and fashions may alter, but our religion can never be a popular religion. I have put my hand to the plough, and, thank God, I have thee for my companion, and I pray that neither of us may ever turn back from the work.'

'Amen, Amen,' said *Sadoc*. 'If God hath made us the salt of the earth, it is his assistance which must enable us to season a corrupted world. If he hath set us up as lamps upon the candlestick, it is he who must supply us with the oil. I hardly looked at my religion before in this light, and I am most happy that this conversation has thus opened it to me. The greatest blessing which God can grant to man in this world, is to become the instrument of his goodness to our fellow-creatures. Such a blessing, however, might make us proud and self-confident; and if this crown be platted of many and sharp thorns, which pierce sorely into our brows, we shall in this too be made like the King of Glory in his humiliation.'

Talbai. 'To do right and to be rewarded in this world, is a state which must be dangerous to the spiritual safety of the believer. To do

right and to suffer for it, is to be free from this danger, and is perhaps the most blessed state which our reason can expect. Well said Jesus, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" and if, of his mercy, he grant us the kingdom of heaven, why should we reject those sufferings which are the appointed means of bringing us to it? Oh, my good friend, prepare your own mind for suffering. This blessing is promised when all men shall revile us and persecute us, and shall say all manner of evil against us falsely for his sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven. The time may come, hereafter, when the servants of Jesus may enjoy all the blessings of their faith, without any external persecution. This cannot be the case now. The religion of Jesus is to be spread throughout the world, and this cannot be accomplished without the blood of many a follower of Jesus. God give us grace to be foremost in this glorious race, and triumphantly to obtain the prize through him who died for us!'

'Amen, Amen,' said *Sadoc*, as they walked on towards Calvary.

CHAPTER X.

It was on his return from this walk that the letter of Hatipha was presented to Sadoc. His mind had been agitated beyond measure by his varied thoughts, and the reflections with which the circumstances of the day had been attended. But the place, the sufferings of his Master, there brought home to him, — the reasons and discourses of his friend, had much contributed to tranquillize his soul; and all earthly considerations seemed buried in the idea of the service to which he was called, and the duties which his new religion imposed on him: and when he had perused the letter once or twice, he wrote the following answer.

‘Sadoc to Hatipha: greeting. — The blessing of Jesus be with you! I little thought with what feelings I should address you when we last parted: had I known all which it has become my lot to go through, — I verily believe that I should never have endured the trial: but the same Hand which chastises can adapt the correction, not only to our need, but to our strength. Your letter has done me much good, The conversation of my friend Talbai has assisted in supporting and rallying my wandering ideas. I can discover the mercy of God exercised in my sufferings; and while I explain this

to you, by giving you an outline of my own life and errors, it will at least guide you in your prayers for me, and furnish me with a salutary confession of my own sins. I had always grown up with false notions of religion. I had looked to temporal exaltation, as much as to spiritual improvement, in all my religious duties. I had imbibed many a Pharisaic error among my opinions; and as I sought to distinguish myself as a servant of God, I hoped to gain the applause of man as well as to please the Almighty. I sought to be accounted righteous, full as much as to be righteous; and I own that my chief thoughts were turned to other joys than those which are at the right hand of God. The praise of men was dearer to me than the praise of God. The first thing which brought these false notions to the test of reality was the preaching of Jesus, and my principal difficulty in receiving him as my teacher consisted in this. But I was convinced, I can hardly tell how; and in endeavoring to impart my newly-acquired treasure to one whom I loved best of created beings, I was confirmed in my opinions.

‘ But the same faults which injured me as a student in the traditions of the Pharisees, attended me when I discoursed on the doctrines of Jesus. I became self-opinionated and harsh,

not with you, for your yielding reason was a constant blessing to my chafed mind, when I had become exasperated with either your father or my own. I had learn to believe in Jesus as a Saviour, but I had not learnt to come unto him as being meek and lowly; and I found no rest to my soul, for I sought it in the troubled waters of endless discussion. How all this might have terminated, the Lord of heaven alone knows; but He who showeth mercy when we deserve it not, has been pleased to chastise, and I trust to cure me, by means of my own faults.

‘I offended your father, and I fear justly offended him; for I behaved towards him as no one ought to behave, who would do unto others as he would wish them to deal towards himself. But I have been punished, and my only comfort is, that you forgive me, and will still pray for me, — pray for me earnestly, — pray frequently, — pray that I may become more like our common Master, long-suffering, gentle. Would that I had always possessed these virtues! But away with such repining thoughts! Lord, give me penitence for having offended thee; but let me ever acknowledge that thy corrections have been those of a kind father. Thy methods of dealing with us speak at once thy wisdom and thy goodness. Thou hast now

called me to stand forward as the soldier of Jesus; and in thy mercy thou hast prevented me from becoming entangled with earthly joys, and earthly cares. Ah, dearest Hatipha, pray for me, that I may war the warfare worthy of my high calling; worthy of her who would have called me her own, if a higher destiny had not prevented us. I feel all the difficulties with which you are surrounded; but I feel, too, that God has granted thee strength, or thou couldst never have written those lines which have so refreshed me. Doubt not that my prayers shall daily be offered for thee; but consider the weakness of him who writes to you, and the dangers to which his frail bark is exposed.

‘The world is now drawn up in formidable array against the followers of Jesus. The terrors of kings and councils, the contempt of the learned, and the hatred of the people are now marshalled in dread opposition against a small band of unlearned and scattered fishermen. And wherein are our hopes? Verily there is a hope even against hope: there is a joy even against joy: there is a comfort when no consolation seems near. Greater is He that is for us, than he that is against us. You see that in the midst of all my afflictions my hope is full of joy, and my mourning is turned into gladness; and when I acknowledge the wisdom of

thy letter, and thank thee for thy kindness, — even when I bid thee an everlasting farewell in this world, — why may I not rejoice? Why may I not? — But farewell any such earthly hopes: farewell any prospects of bliss on this side the grave. I will rejoice that I have been accounted worthy to suffer here with Jesus; I will rejoice that I have been taught the blessing of mourning; I will rejoice that my earthly hopes have been destroyed, to make my way for brighter prospects in heaven. My path in this world is narrow, dark, and hedged about with thorns; but the end of such a path is peace. I foresee so many present and future dangers to all who call upon the name of Jesus, that I cannot imagine that my life will be long spared. But the same God who gave may take away, and blessed be his name. Only pray! pray that we may be enabled to serve him either in death or life, and that hereafter we may meet in joy unspeakable and full of glory. Ah, why does my pen still linger over the paper, when I have already said all that I have to write? Is it to tell thee what thou knowest: that while I ask thy prayers I am unworthy of them? No, it is to tell thee nothing; it is to let thee see, that he who can at one moment speak as a martyr, the next instant feels that he is but a man, and that a weak one.

‘God bless thee, Hatipha. The Lord hear thy prayer and hearken to thy petitions, when thou askest help and grace for him who sorely needs assistance from above. I have been vain enough to pray for the crown of martyrdom: how unworthy do I now feel of such a privilege. God give me grace in some unhonored path to honor him, to serve him for his glory, and not for my own. Farewell! Pray, pray, pray for me.’

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